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Horizon

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

BALLAD OF THE LONG-LEGGED BAIT

by DYLAN THOMAS

JUNE 23rd

by MASS-OBSERVATION

WAR SYMPOSIUM:

(iv) **THE WALL**

by WILLIAM SANSON

THE ARTISTIC VISION OF PROUST

by R. IRONSIDE

J. M. BARRIE

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THE HUMAN HOUSE

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GEORGE P. G. G.

KEW GARDENS, 1940

COMMENT

CAN we have an English Renaissance? Elizabethan England began one, Caroline England continued it, Augustan England completed it: our romantic writers from 1780 to 1840 led the world. It is only since about nineteen hundred that, as a creative country, we have gone off the boil. Freud, Einstein, Proust, Picasso, Stravinsky, Corbusier and so on, are names to which we cannot supply equals from this country. Lawrence, alone of English literary figures of the last thirty years, is capable of inflaming the world as have those vigorous but imperfect artists, Byron, Shaw and Wilde; for Lawrence alone possesses the requisite halo of anglophobia and persecution.

It would not be unfair to say that the England of Baldwin, MacDonald and Chamberlain was a decadent country—'Cabbage Land', 'Land of lobelias and tennis flannels', 'This England where nobody is well'—its gods were wealth and sport; from any unpleasant decision it flinched in disgust; though assailed by critics from the right and left, it still wallowed supinely in a scented bath of stocks and shares, race-cards and roses, while the persecuted, who believed in the great English traditions of the nineteenth century, knocked in vain at the door.

Since Dunkirk we have seen the end of the political and military decadence of England. Whatever residue of complacency, sloth and inefficiency there may be left, England is now a great power, and able to stand for something in the world again. When the war is over we shall live in an Anglo-American world. There will be other great powers, but the sanctions on which the West reposes will be the ideas for which England and America have fought and won, and the machines behind them. We had all this in 1918 and made a failure of it. The ideas expired in the impotence of Geneva. The machines spouted Ford cars, Lucky Strike, Mary Pickford and Coca-Cola. The new masters of the world created Le Touquet and Juan les Pins, fought each other for oil and reparations, blamed each other for the slump, and wandered blandly and ignorantly over Europe with a dark blue suit, letter of credit, set of clean teeth and stiff white collar. Fascism arose as a religion of disappointment, a spreading nausea at the hypocrisy of the owners of the twentieth century. It is important to see that

Fascism is a disease, as catching as influenza; we all when tired and disillusioned have Fascist moments, when belief in human nature vanishes, when we burn with anger and envy like the underdog and the sucker, when we hate the virtuous and despise the weak, when we feel as Goebbels permanently feels, that a fine sentiment is bally-hoo, that we are the dupes of our leaders and that the masses are evil, to be resisted with the cruelty born of fear. This is the theological sin of despair, a Haw-Haw moment which quickly passes, but which Fascism has made permanent and built up into a philosophy. In every human being there is Lear and a fool, a hero and a clown, who comes on the stage and burlesques his master. He should never be censored, but neither should he be allowed to rule. In the long run all that Fascism guarantees is a Way of Death; it criticizes the easy life by offering a noisy way of killing and dying. The key philosophies which the world will need after the war are, therefore, those which believe in life, which assert the goodness and sanity of man, and yet which will never allow those virtues to run to seed and engender their opposites again.

The greatest discovery we can make from this war, the one without which no Renaissance is possible, is what human beings are really like; what is good for them, what standard of living, what blend of freedom and responsibility, what mixture of courage and intelligence, heart and head makes for progress and happiness. We find out what we need by having to do without what we think we need. All words and ideas must be tested and built up again from experience. Thus it is clear that a chaotic situation in human affairs has been caused by the word Liberty. Liberty is not an end in itself; complete liberty makes men miserable; liberty is only valuable as providing the space in which human dignity can develop, and it is human dignity which more than anything else is vilified by totalitarian states. When we have learnt what kind of life we want, what kind of man should live it, a Renaissance becomes possible. Here are some conditions for it.

An artistic Renaissance can only take place where there is a common attitude to life, a new and universal movement. By the time Anglo-American war aims have crystallized from the philosophy behind them, this should be in existence. But a political movement can have the art it deserves until it has learnt

to respect the artist. The English mistrust of the intellectual, the brutish æsthetic apathy and contempt for the creative artist must go. Bred of the intolerance of public schoolboys, the infectious illiteracy of the once appreciative gentry, the money grubbing of the Victorian industrialists and the boorishness of the Hanoverian court, our Philistinism, which also expresses the English lack of imagination and fear of life, should be made a criminal offence. There can be no dignity of man without respect for the humanities.

A Renaissance also requires a belief in spiritual values, for materialism distils nothing but a little rare dandyism, an occasional Watteau, and that will not be enough. The most sensible cure for materialism is a surfeit of it, which post-war science and economics should assure us. Yet we cannot get such a spiritual revival until the religious forces and the spiritual humanistic forces come to terms together, as did the Basque priests and the Spanish Republicans, or Bernanos and the French Left. This is the hardest bridge to erect, but it will have to be done, and should not be impossible; for our civilization is impregnated with Christianity even where it seems unchristian; the foundations of our beliefs are those of Christianity and Greece whatever those beliefs may have become.

Regionalism, after the War, must come into its own. There is already a Welsh Renaissance in being; there is activity in Ireland and Scotland. Regionalism is the remedy for provincialism. Only by decentralizing can we avoid that process which ends by confining all art to the capital, and so giving it an urban outlook. England is one of those mysterious geographical entities where great art has flourished. We have the racial mixture, the uneven climate, the European tradition, the deep deserted mineshaft. We must reopen the vein.

The greatest danger, let us hope, to the artist in the England of the future will be his success. He will live through the nightmare to see the new golden age of the west, a world in which no one will be unwanted again, in which the artist will always be in danger of dissipating himself in the service of the State, in broadcasts or lecture tours, in propaganda and pamphlets. As in ancient Rome or China, or modern Russia or U.S.A., the artist will have a sense of responsibility to a world-wide audience, which he must control. But that should be the only temptation for him in what

will at last be a serious world, a world in which the new conquerors avoid the mistakes of the old and bring to the opportunities of victory the wisdom and dignity that is learnt in defeat. We must never go back to Monkey Hill, to the Tiger of Fascism or the Ape of Pluto-Democracy, but move through the new Europe like elephants, wise, farseeing, stoical and dignified—the elephant, according to Buffon, is the only animal to feel Ambition. We might add that he preserves his individuality though he lives in the herd, combines adaptability to the future with a sense of the past, while his honour and generosity are, like his memory, proverbial, and his trunk, which can fell a tree or thread a needle, is the most delicate of nature's instruments. Ambition we certainly need in England in our new hayscented Elephant Order.

ou tout ce que l'on aime est digne d'être aimé,
and Lucidity, Humanity, Imagination, as well.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

R. Ironside, whose first long essay, *Burne-Jones and Moreau*, appears in *Horizon*, is at the Tate Gallery. Roger Roughton, a young Communist, who edited *Contemporary Poetry and Prose*, committed suicide in Dublin last April, aged twenty-four. *The Human House* was finished shortly before he died. *The Theory of Justice* was written before the entry of Russia into the war, and Catherin Andrassy feels that in the altered circumstances some of his expressions are rather strong. They relate, however, to the central problem of Ends *v.* Means, which must be settled by Stalinists and Liberals if the split in the Left is ever to be healed and a new popular front emerge from the war.

Gregorio Prieto was born at Valdepenas in La Mancha. Since 1935 he has lived in England and has published two books of drawings, 'An English Garden' and 'Students: Oxford and Cambridge'. He is now preparing a book of studies of English life, and another called 'The Portrait', and also illustrations to the Sonnets of Shakespeare.

'Kew Gardens' is from the recent exhibition of some of his drawings and paintings at Oxford.

The travelling exhibition of Town Planning reviewed in the June number by Erno Goldfinger was organized for the 1946 Council by Ralph Tubbs.

DYLAN THOMAS

BALLAD OF THE LONG- LEGGED BAIT

The bows glided down, and the coast
Blackened with birds took a last look
At his thrashing hair and whale-blue
eye;
The trodden town rang its cobbles for
luck.

Then goodbye to the fishermanned
Boat with its anchor free and fast
As a bird hooking over the sea,
High and dry by the top of the mast,

Whispered the affectionate sand
And the bulwarks of the dazzled quay.
For my sake sail, and never look back,
Said the looking land.

Sails drank the wind, and white as
milk

He sped into the drinking dark;
The sun shipwrecked west on a pearl
And the moon swam out of its hulk,

Funnels and masts went by in a whirl.
Goodbye to the man on the sea-
legged deck
To the gold gut that sings on his reel
To the bait that stalked out of the
sack,

For we saw him throw to the swift
flood
A girl alive with his hooks through
her lips:
All the fishes were rayed in blood, /
Said the dwindling ships.

Goodbye to chimneys and funnels,
Old wives that spin in the smoke,

He was blind to the eyes of candles
In the praying windows of waves

But heard his bait buck in the wake
And tussle in a shoal of loves.
Now cast down your rod, for the
whole
Of the sea is hilly with whales,

She longs among horses and angels,
The rainbow-fish bend in her joys,
Floated the lost cathedral
Chimes of the rocked buoys.

Where the anchor rode like a gull
Miles over the moonstruck boat
A squall of birds bellowed and fell,
A cloud blew the rain from its throat;

He saw the storm smoke out to kill
With fuming bows and ram of ice,
Fire on starlight, rake Jesu's stream;
And nothing shone on the water's face

But the oil and bubble of the moon,
Plunging and piercing in his course
The lured fish under the foam
Witnessed with a kiss.

Whales in the wake like capes and
Alps
Quaked the sick sea and snouted deep,
Deep the great bushed bait with
raining lips
Slipped the fins of those humpbacked
tons

And fled their love in a weaving dip.
Oh, Jericho was falling in their lungs!

She nipped and dived in the nick of
love,
Spun on a spout like a long-legged
ball

Till every beast blared down in a
swerve

Till every turtle crushed from his
shell

Till every bone in the scuttled grave
Rose and crowed and fell!

Good luck to the hand on the rod,
There is thunder under its thumbs;
Gold gut is a lightning thread,
His fiery reel sings off its flames,

The whirled boat in the burn of his
blood

Is crying from nets to knives,
Oh the shearwater birds and their
boatsized brood

Oh the bulls of Biscay and their calves

Are making under the green, laid veil
The long-legged beautiful bait their
wives.

Break the black news and paint on a
sail

Huge weddings in the waves,

Over the wakeward-flashing spray
Over the gardens of the floor
Clash out the mounting dolphin's day,
My mast is a bell-spire,

Strike and smoothe, for my decks are
drums,

Sing through the water-spoken prow
The octopus walking into her limbs
The polar eagle with his tread of snow.

From salt-lipped beak to the kick of
the stern

Sing how the seal has kissed her dead!
The long, laid minute's bride drifts on
Old in her cruel bed.

Over the graveyard in the water
Mountains and galleries beneath
Nightingale and hyena
Rejoicing for that drifting death

Sing and howl through sand and
anemone

Valley and sahara in a shell,
Oh all the wanting flesh his enemy
Thrown to the sea in the shell of a gi

Is old as water and plain as an eel;
Always goodbye to the long-legged
bread
Scattered in the paths of his heels
For the salty birds fluttered and fed

And the tall grains foamed in the
bills;

Always goodbye to the fires of the
face,

For the crab-backed dead on the sea
bed rose

And scuttled over her eyes,

The blind, clawed stare is cold as
sleet.

The tempter under the eyelid
Who shows to the selves asleep
Mast-high moon-white women naked

Walking in wishes and lovely for
shame

Is dumb and gone with his flame
brides.

Susannah's drowned in the bearded
stream

And no-one stirs at Sheba's side

But the hungry kings of the tides;
Sin who had a woman's shape
Sleeps till Silence blows on a cloud
And all the lifted waters walk and
leap.

Lucifer that bird's dropping
Out of the sides of the north

Has melted away and is lost
 Always lost in her vaulted breath,

Venus lies star-struck in her wound
 And the sensual ruins make
 Seasons over the liquid world,
 White springs in the dark.

Always goodbye, cried the voices
 through the shell,
 Goodbye always for the flesh is cast
 And the fisherman winds his reel
 With no more desire than a ghost.

Always good luck, praised the finned
 in the feather
 Bird after dark and the laughing fish
 As the sails drank up the hail of
 thunder
 And the long-tailed lightning lit his
 catch.

The boat swims into the six-year
 weather,
 A wind throws a shadow and it freezes
 fast.
 See what the gold gut drags from
 under
 Mountains and galleries to the crest!

See what clings to hair and skull
 As the boat skims on with drinking
 wings!
 The statues of great rain stand still,
 And the flakes fall like hills.

Sing and strike his heavy haul
 Toppling up the boatside in a snow
 of light!
 His decks are drenched with miracles.
 Oh miracle of fishes! the long dead
 bite!

Out of the urn the size of a man,
 Out of the room the weight of his
 trouble
 Out of the house that holds a town
 In the continent of a fossil

One by one in dust and shawl,
 Dry as echoes and insect-faced,
 His fathers cling to the hand of the
 girl
 And the dead hand leads the past,

Leads them as children and as air
 On to the blindly tossing tops;
 The centuries throw back their hair
 And the old men sing from newborn
 lips:

Time is bearing another son.
 Kill Time! She turns in her pain!
 The oak is felled in the acorn
 And the hawk in the egg kills the
 wren.

He who blew the great fire in
 And died on a hiss of flames
 Or walked on the earth in the evening
 Counting the denials of the grains

Clings to her drifting hair, and climbs;
 And he who taught their lips to sing
 Weeps like the risen sun among
 The liquid choirs of his tribes.

The rod bends low, divining land,
 And through the sundered water
 crawls -
 A garden holding to her hand
 With birds and animals

With men and women and waterfalls
 Trees cool and dry in the whirlpool
 of ships
 And stunned and still on the green,
 laid veil
 Sand with legends in its virgin laps

And prophets loud on the burned
 dunes;
 Insects and valleys hold her thighs
 hard,
 Times and places grip her breast bone,
 She is breaking with seasons and
 clouds;

Round her trailed wrist fresh water
 weaves,
 With moving fish and rounded stones
 Up and down the greater waves
 A separate river breathes and runs;

Strike and sing his catch of fields
 For the surge is sown with barley,
 The cattle graze on the covered foam,
 The hills have footed the waves away,

With wild sea fillies and soaking
 bridles
 With salty colts and gales in their
 limbs
 All the horses of his haul of miracles
 Gallop through the arched, green
 farms,

Trot and gallop with gulls upon them
 And thunderbolts in their manes.
 O Rome and Sodom Tomorrow and
 London
 The country tide is cobbled with
 towns,

And steeples pierce the cloud on her
 shoulder
 And the streets that the fisherman
 combed
 When his long-legged flesh was a
 wind on fire
 And his loin was a hunting flame

Coil from the thoroughfares of her
 hair

And terribly lead him home alive
 Lead her prodigal home to his terror
 The furious ox-killing house of loves

Down, down, down, under the
 ground,
 Under the floating villages,
 Turns the moon-chained and water-
 wound
 Metropolis of fishes,

There is nothing left of the sea but its
 sound,
 Under the earth the loud sea walks,
 In deathbeds of orchards the boat
 dies down
 And the bait is drowned among hay-
 ricks,

Land, land, land, nothing remains
 Of the pacing, famous sea but its
 speech,
 And into its talkative seven tombs
 The anchor dives through the floor
 of a church.

Goodbye, good luck, struck the sun
 and the moon,
 To the fisherman lost on the land.
 He stands alone at the door of his
 home,
 With his long-legged heart in his
 hand.

JUNE 23rd

By MASS-OBSERVATION¹

The attack on Russia has overshadowed everything else this week. Reactions to the attack are, however, heavily coloured by preceding morale and prevailing mood. There were marked signs during last week of accelerating anxiety about the course of the war, a decline in confidence in our control of the war situation—encouraged by slow Syrian advances, doubtful Libya moves, and the Turkish-German pact. While people were still confident in victory, doubt about the method had much increased and with this, some impatience with the war—the desire to get it over and done with; associated with this, a tendency to try to put the war out of mind altogether whenever possible—a tendency rather unfavourable to industrial efficiency, etc. Offsetting this, the biggest constructive factor in the past week has been the fine weather, which has greatly assisted those who want to see the right side; as typically put by a working-class housewife:

‘This weather does you good. Nothing like a bit of sun to make you feel alright with the world. Trouble is, it isn’t. Still, I’m sure it’s all going to come out right in the end.’

The lovely summer throws the grim events of war into sharper contrast, the sunshine nostalgically recalling days of comparative ease and calm.

Into this situation favourably impacted the Sunday morning news of Russia and the Sunday evening speech of the Prime Minister. These are treated separately below, Churchill’s broadcast being correlated with other investigation done in the week in continuation of points raised previously.

A. REACTIONS TO RUSSIA

Detailed study of Russian reaction was made from Sunday morning onwards in five London areas, Bolton, Ipswich and Oxford. Results from all these places closely correspond, and for all practical purposes the reaction may be treated as general,

¹ Part of one of ‘Mass-Observation’s’ routine day-to-day reports on the impact of war upon civilian mind and mood. Written 23/6/41.

local differences being much less important than individual and temperamental differences within the locality.

The *prevailing reaction now* is exceptionally keen interest, a great deal of confusion, a majority glad at the attack, extensive disagreement on Russia's prospects, some strong anxiety (especially among women) at the war spreading, and in general an extremely fluid state of public opinion which might easily move in several directions, according to leadership and propaganda.

In the following analysis we will attempt to indicate the relative strength and quality of various elements in the present reaction at the mass level.

First Reaction

Up till the last, for every one person who expected Germany to attack Russia, three thought it was a bluff or that they would compromise. Few people believed that Hitler could be so strong as to take on Russia at will, and the general feeling for some months past had been that the *initiative lay with Russia*.

Many people thought the press were exaggerating the whole thing. The fact that the press was right has indeed surprised many people into unusually favourable comments on the press, and thereby been one step up in press prestige—after many steps down.

First reaction was, therefore, one of considerable amazement coupled with bewilderment (Sunday morning and afternoon).

Second Reaction

Churchill's speech was well timed and exerted a necessary leadership on Sunday evening (for reactions to speech see Section B). The attack, which at first had seemed rather *remote*, now became more our own affair, part of our war. *Interest* increased and by evening there was a high degree of spontaneous conversation on the subject; the only war news which has provoked comparable interest in the past year has been Hess. Both Russia and Hess contain some of the same elements of astonishment and mystery.

Effect of Attack on Morale

The major effect of the attack has been to make people feel much better about the war and its future; but this is by no means universal reaction:

- 43 per cent were glad of the attack
- 18 per cent were half-and-half
- 16 per cent were sorry
- 23 per cent. were undecided or unopinionated

It should be stressed that throughout there is no general agreed reaction, that there is *an exceptional degree of differing opinion and doubt*.

Reasons for being glad

People were glad about the news chiefly for the following reasons:

- (i) The attack would keep Germany busy and give us a rest—this was largely a ‘selfish attitude’ often connected with mention of air-raids, and sometimes associated with cynical comments like ‘good thing somebody else is carrying the baby’.
- (ii) That whatever the outcome, Germany is bound to lose many men and much equipment; and that at the best Russia might beat her (see below on public opinion on the probable outcome).
- (iii) The attack will give us *more time* to prepare. Those holding this view often showed signs of complacency or carelessness, repeating some of the Chamberlain slogans about time, etc.
- (iv) It will give us an ally, and we have no other ally at the moment. People mentioning this clearly got a feeling of relief from feeling that somebody else was fighting with us, and the same feeling underlies many people’s attitude. But on this, as on practically every point, there is confusion not only between different individuals, but also within the minds of individuals. For instance, this typical reaction:

‘I think it is a very good thing Russia coming into the war, we have no allies that are fighting and now we have got one. We can probably win now; Germany can’t beat Russia and she will probably use a lot of men up in the battle which will mean she can’t concentrate on us so much. I think it will slow up America, I don’t think she will come in until she sees what is happening to Russia.’

- (v) Some people were glad that something had just *happened* again, something to make the war more interesting and less boring. A break in the clinches, an uppercut bringing the spectators to their feet!
- (vi) 'When thieves fall out, it's good for honest men'.

Reasons for being sad

It should be noted at this stage that there is really very little anti-Russian feeling in this country, especially among the working and artisan classes.¹ Therefore, the question of the Russians themselves, and how fightable they are, only seldom came into people's conversations.

- (i) Consequently, there is neither appreciable pleasure at the Russians being attacked as human beings, and not much regret on the same grounds. But quite a common humane attitude, especially among women, is sympathy and sorrow at anyone and anywhere being bombed or blitzed.
- (ii) There is considerable anxiety, especially among older women, at the war being extended in this way:
- 'It seems to be going all over the world.'
- 'Where will it ever end?'
- 'They'll be fighting in heaven presently.'
- (iii) Associated with the above, is the idea already stressed in previous reports that the whole pattern of civilization is getting out of control. The feeling that unpleasantness and horror may unexpectedly explode anywhere. And with this worry about *whatever will happen next?*
- (iv) Others feel that the attack will lengthen the war, and there is quite a lot of comment on this theme, especially stressing it will make it last an 'extra two years'.
- (v) People are depressed because they take the very fact of a German attack as being a mark of German strength. They say that Hitler has always known what he was doing up till now, and so go on to conclude that he has only attacked Russia because he is certain he can overrun it without difficulty.

¹ A particular characteristic of this war is the lack of mass hatred for an enemy, including German (still called by the affectionate bedroom term 'Jerry' by nearly all civilians). The press gives a rather misleading impression of the private attitudes.

(vi) There is also strong feeling that if Russia is beaten, there is nothing left to keep Germany under control. Here there is a tension point for the future. Many people expect that if Russia is beaten, Germany is free to plan the invasion of Britain one hundred per cent, and need think of nothing else in the world.

(vii) Finally, some people think that Russia hates us just as much as Germany does, and are anxious that if she beats Germany, she will then attack us. There is quite a striking degree of comment along this line:

‘Well now, this country will have to change her tone a bit. I suppose it will be Stalin dear, from now on. We’re always such hypocrites, we’re bound to say Russia is our ally. It’s absolutely no use our pretending that Russia has come into the war because she believes in our cause, because she loathes our guts.’

‘I think it’s a very dangerous thing Russia coming into the war. Whoever wins we will have to fight. I am afraid people will imagine it’s a good thing, but it isn’t a good thing. Russia hates us more than she hates Germany.’

Public Estimate of Prospects

Again, there is a wide difference of opinion on this subject. On the whole, men tended quite strongly to think that Russia would at least *resist* successfully, while women tended to think that they would not be able to do much against the Germans.

The Finnish campaign is often adduced as evidence of Russia’s weakness. But more often, the argument is simply that the Germans are so efficient and so well equipped they can do what they like and overrun anything.

At present, only a small minority think that Russia will actually beat up Germany, and very few indeed visualize Russia driving the Germans back and in her turn overrunning Germany.

On the other hand, few people at present really expect that the Germans will gain very much, even if they are successful. The commonest argument there is of the *Russian colossus*, so enormous to be unbeatable, a great sponge which can absorb any attack. The Japanese war on China and the experiences of Napoleon are

often adduced in support of this line. The vast man-power of Russia, and its enormous resources, are also stressed.

While there is no clear-cut opinion on the subject, probably the main idea people have at the moment is that *Russia cannot beat the Germans*, but that the Germans are stronger and will be more militarily successful, though they cannot cope with the size of the Russian problem and will in the end exhaust their resources on this account, leading to some sort of stalemate. Typical comment on this:

'Russia is so enormous they really couldn't be beaten, they are capable of absorbing shock as China can. I am sure that Russia can't win either, so heaven knows what will happen.'

Questions in the Public Mind

Already there are a large number of questions developing out of this expected turn in the war. People have got it fairly clear in their minds that we represented the 'democracies' fighting the 'dictators', of which Russia was one. People did not feel strongly anti-Russia or anti-Stalin, and indeed there has long been considerable pro-Russian feeling among a large section of the population who are not interested in Communism (there are a number of published pre-war surveys illustrating this).

People had also got fairly clear in their minds the line they thought the war was taking, and the rôle of Russians the cunning onlooker who would *choose its own time* to do what it wanted to do, whatever that was. The German attack has therefore raised many queries of which the following are among the most important:

- Is Russia really a dictatorship? Or was that all propaganda?
- What is our attitude now towards dictatorships?
- What about the ban on the *Daily Worker*?
- What will happen if Russia wins?
- Isn't Poland at war with Russia? How about that?
- Wasn't it only a short time ago we were backing the gallant Finns against Russian aggression? How about that?
- What are the Japanese going to do—will they attack Russia?

But stronger than any of these questions is the extreme ideological confusion now produced by our sudden co-operation with a country against which our national press (in particular) and American films have developed continuous hostile propaganda, and against which a wide range of our statesmen have warned us, especially since the war. The exact quality of this uneasiness can perhaps be best expressed in the following typical verbatims:

1. 'Russia is all communists and we are all capitalists, that's what we are, and that's what they are. How can we mix?'
2. 'The whole thing is a bloody mess up. I suppose this is what is meant by a class war.'
3. 'It's a funny turn up, isn't it? We shall solve the mystery of things one of these days.'

B. THE PRIME MINISTER'S BROADCAST: AND HIS PRESTIGE

(i) *Churchill's Speech*

The Prime Minister's broadcast on Sunday night was generally approved and received more favourable comment than any of his recent broadcasts. People commented that in it he recaptured some of the vigour and toughness which people expect from him and which some thought he had rather lost. Perhaps the most typical comment was:

'One of his best.'

There was, however, some adverse comment on alleged insincerity, the way he had always been against Russia and now turned round, but without frankly saying so, mixing it up with 'maidens still smiling', etc. One comment, representative of a minority feeling was that Churchill had said to himself:

'I wonder if I can get away with this speech.'

In general, reaction to this broadcast has stepped up the Premier's speech prestige again. There had been a decline (on a small scale) in enthusiasm for his speeches lately, with one person in five making unfavourable comments. The most frequent criticism, especially amongst women, of recent speeches and broadcasts:

F40B: 'Very evasive.'

F40C: 'Well, there's no change in them from when he was first Prime Minister.'

F25B: 'They're boring.'

M25B: 'Not much. He seems to be trying to impress people with cheerfulness.'

There were also a few more general criticisms:

M25C: 'I don't think much of them.'

M25B: 'Not very impressive.'

(ii) *Churchill as post-war P.M.*

Detailed opinions (London only so far) on the subject of whether or not it would be a good thing or a bad thing for Churchill to be Prime Minister after the war, were collected in mid-June with the following results:

	Male per cent	Female per cent	Total per cent
Good	45	36	40
Bad	45	35	40
No opinion	10	29	20

Opinions are thus very even on this point, with men more against than women. Some significant comments:

M40B: 'I think he's too revolutionary for peacetime.'

M60C: 'I think he deserves a better reward than that.'

M60D: 'Oh yes, certainly. He's had the sour, he can have some of the sweet.'

M35D: 'No. After the war we want to have social reform.'

M40D: 'I don't like 'im. Mr. Churchill's never been a pal of mine.'

F50C: 'I think he's too much of a dictator for a peacetime Prime Minister.'

F50C: 'I don't think he'll be strong enough to continue.'

F45C: 'I think he's too old.'

The replies show that for all Mr. Churchill's popularity, there are a large number of people who would not trust him in peacetime, or who feel his personality is only suitable to war. And this in spite of the general atmosphere of warmest praise of Churchill which exists at present.

(iii) Alternatives to Churchill

Londoners were asked who they thought would make the best Prime Minister if Churchill died suddenly. About one person in ten thought there was no one to take Churchill's place, and rather more had no interest or opinion on the subject:

'I'm damned if I know.'

'I wouldn't care to support anyone, they're all mediocre.'

'One of our errand boys—we've got none left.'

Three people stand out as candidates, in the following order:

1. Eden
2. Bevin
3. Beaverbrook (nearly equal to 2)

Eden is far and away the most popular candidate, being mentioned more than three times as often as Bevin. He has always been one of the most popular politicians, and in several pre-war polls he was better favoured for the premiership than Churchill.

The only other Conservative mentioned with any sort of frequency was Duff Cooper. The only significant Liberal candidate was Hore-Belisha, who is one of the most popular also-rans. But there are a wide range of Labour men mentioned—Morrison, Attlee, Cripps in that order, also Dalton, Alexander, Greenwood, Pritt, etc.

PEACE AIMS

The German attack on Russia is likely to raise again in people's minds the problem of war aims, of what we are fighting for. The idea that we are fighting *against* dictatorship, including Stalin's, was fairly well fixed in the public mind, though there is little mass antagonism to Russia itself, and the new situation is bound to lead to some changes in focus. Just before the attack on Russia, a repeat of surveys made in April 1941 and December 1940, showed that public opinion on the subject of the Government declaring its war aims had not appreciably changed, except in one respect—a steady increase in those saying we had already declared our war aims. This group were represented as follows:

8 per cent in December 1940

12 per cent in April 1941

19 per cent in June 1941

This steady growth in those clear about our war aims is likely now to be put back :

As before, people were asked what they thought our war aims should be. The only appreciable change in recent months is a tendency to increase negative statements (destroy the Nazis, etc.), a slight increase in stress on home policy changes, and a slight decrease in general ideological peace aiming with the whole of humanity as its scope.

The things people spontaneously named most often as our war aims were as follows, in order of frequency:

1. Destroy Nazis, etc.
2. For freedom or anti-Dictatorship
3. Reforms of Home policy
4. World peace, humanity, etc.

Another significant feature is a sharp *decrease* in those having no opinion on this subject.

Post-war Pessimism

Closely associated with peace aims are people's feelings about the post-war world. In a series of surveys undertaken by M-O and by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (see *Economic Journal*), it has been shown that a very extensive economic pessimism exists in a whole series of areas surveyed throughout the country. A recent repeat survey in five London boroughs showed a further slight increase in pessimism since February—there is considerable error in the figures, which are indicative only of a general trend.

Attitude to Post-war Economy	PERCENTAGE ADOPTING THIS ATTITUDE	
	In Feb. 1941 per cent	In June 1941 per cent
Optimistic	21	18
Pessimistic	59	63
Uncertain or no opinion	20	19

This subject has now been studied in a badly blitzed town,
. . . . , as part of a very detailed survey of the whole population

of four streets. Here, the figure for economic pessimism reached a record high level and optimism a record low level.

7 per cent were optimistic

78 per cent pessimistic

15 per cent were uncertain or un-opinionated

FANTASIES

The Russian news, with its confusing impact, has had some curious semi-rumour effects, in producing peculiar semi-rumour theories of a rather unusual type, e.g.:

1. Turkey has become definitely anti-British and is also about to attack Russia.
2. Now that Russia has come into the war, America won't—you can't expect them both to.
3. Stalin was drunk when he kissed Matsuoka and said 'We're both Asiatics,' and this did a lot of harm in making the Axis think Stalin was losing his grip.
4. Some Russians have landed at Dover! (This seems to be a hangover of the bearded Russian rumour of the last war.)

WAR SYMPOSIUM — IV

WILLIAM SANSOM

THE WALL

IT was our third job that night. Until this thing happened, work had been without incident. There had been shrapnel, a few enquiring bombs, and some huge fires; but these were unremarkable and have since merged without identity into the neutral maze of fire and noise and water and night, without date and without hour, with neither time nor form, that lowers mistily at the back of my mind as a picture of the air-raid season.

I suppose we were worn down and shivering. Three a.m. is a mean-spirited hour. I suppose we were drenched, with the cold hose water trickling in at our collars and settling down at the tails of our shirts. Without doubt the heavy brass couplings felt moulded from metal-ice. Probably the open roar of the pumps drowned the petulant buzz of the raiders above, and certainly the ubiquitous fire-glow made an orange stage-set of the streets. Black water would have puddled the City alleys and I suppose our hands and our faces were black as the water. Black with hacking about among the burnt-up rafters. These things were an every-night nonentity. They happened and they were not forgotten because they were never even remembered.

But I do remember it was our third job. And there we were—Len, Lofty, Verno and myself—playing a fifty-foot jet up the face of a tall City warehouse and thinking of nothing at all. You don't think of anything after the first few hours. You just watch the white pole of water lose itself in the fire and you think of nothing. Sometimes you move the jet over to another window. Sometimes the orange dims to black—but you only ease your grip on the ice-cold nozzle and continue pouring careless gallons through the window. You know the fire will fester for hours yet. However, that night the blank, indefinite hours of waiting were sharply interrupted—by an unusual sound. Very suddenly a long rattling crack of bursting brick and mortar perforated the moment. And then the upper half of that five-storey building heaved over towards us. It hung there, poised for a timeless second before

rumbling down at us. I was thinking of nothing at all and then I was thinking of everything in the world.

In that simple second my brain digested every detail of the scene. New eyes opened at the sides of my head so that, from within, I photographed a hemispherical panorama bounded by the huge length of the building in front of me and the narrow lane on either side.

Blocking us on the left was the squat trailer pump, roaring and quivering with effort. Water throbbed from its overflow valves and from leakages in the hose and couplings. A ceaseless stream spewed down its grey sides into the gutter. But nevertheless a fat iron exhaust pipe glowed red-hot in the middle of the wet engine. I had to look past Lofty's face. Lofty was staring at the controls, hands tucked into his armpits for warmth. Lofty was thinking of nothing. He had a black diamond of soot over one eye, like the White-eyed Kaffir in negative.

To the other side of me was a free run up the alley. Overhead swung a sign—'Catto and Henley'. I wondered what in hell they sold. Old stamps? The alley was quite free. A couple of lengths of dead, deflated hose wound over the darkly glistening pavement. Charred flotsam dammed up one of the gutters. A needle of water fountained from a hole in a live hose-length. Beneath a blue shelter light lay a shattered coping stone. The next shop along was a tobacconist's, windowless, with fake display cartons torn open for anybody to see. The alley was quite free.

Behind me, Len and Verno shared the weight of the hose. They heaved up against the strong backward drag of water-pressure. All I had to do was yell 'Drop it'—and then run. We could risk the live hose snaking up at us. We could run to the right down the free alley—Len, Verno and me. But I never moved. I never said 'Drop it' or anything else. That long second held me hypnotized, rubber boots cemented to the pavement. Ton upon ton of red-hot brick hovering in the air above us numbed all initiative. I could only think. I couldn't move.

Six yards in front stood the blazing building. A minute before I would never have distinguished it from any other drab Victorian atrocity happily on fire. Now I was immediately certain of every minute detail. The building was five storeys high. The top four storeys were fiercely alight. The rooms inside were alive with red fire. The black outside walls remained untouched. And thus, like

the lighted carriages of a night express, there appeared alternating rectangles of black and red that emphasized vividly the extreme symmetry of the window spacing: each oblong window shape posed as a vermilion panel set in perfect order upon the dark face of the wall. There were ten windows to each floor, making forty windows in all. In rigid rows of ten, one row placed precisely above the other, with strong contrasts of black and red, the blazing windows stood to attention in strict formation. The oblong building, the oblong windows, the oblong spacing. Orange-red colour seemed to *bulge* from the black framework, assumed tactile values like boiling jelly that expanded inside a thick black squared grill.

Three of the storeys, thirty blazing windows and their huge frame of black brick, a hundred solid tons of hard, deep Victorian wall, pivoted over towards us and hung flatly over the alley. Whether the descending wall actually paused in its fall I can never know. Probably it never did. Probably it only seemed to hang there. Probably my eyes digested its action at an early period of momentum, so that I saw it 'off true' but before it had gathered speed.

The night grew darker as the great mass hung over us. Through smoke-fogged fireglow the moonlight had hitherto penetrated to the pit of our alley through declivities in the skyline. Now some of the moonlight was being shut out as the wall hung ever further over us. The wall shaded the moonlight like an inverted awning. Now the pathway of light above had been squeezed to a thin line. That was the only silver lining I ever believed in. It shone out—a ray of hope. But it was a declining hope, for although at this time the entire hemispherical scene appeared static, an imminence of movement could be sensed throughout—presumably because the scene was actually moving. Even the speed of the shutter which closed the photograph on my mind was powerless to exclude this motion from a deeper consciousness. The picture appeared static to the limited surface senses, the eyes and the material brain, but beyond that there was hidden movement.

The second was timeless. I had leisure to remark many things. For instance, that an iron derrick, slightly to the left, would not hit me. This derrick stuck out from the building and I could feel its sharpness and hardness as clearly as if I had run my body intimately over its contour. I had time to notice that it carried a

foot-long hook, a chain with three-inch rings, two girder supports and a wheel more than twice as large as my head.

A wall will fall in many ways. It may sway over to the one side or the other. It may crumble at the very beginning of its fall. It may remain intact and fall flat. This wall fell as flat as a pancake. It clung to its shape through ninety degrees to the horizontal. Then it detached itself from the pivot and slammed down on top of us.

The last resistance of bricks and mortar at the pivot point cracked off like automatic gun fire. The violent sound both deafened us and brought us to our senses. We dropped the hose and crouched. Afterwards Verno said that I knelt slowly on one knee with bowed head, like a man about to be knighted. Well, I got my knighting. There was an incredible noise—a thunderclap condensed into the space of an eardrum—and then the bricks and the mortar came tearing and burning into the flesh of my face.

Lofty, away by the pump, was killed. Len, Verno and myself they dug out. There was very little brick on top of us. We had been lucky. We had been framed by one of those symmetrical, oblong window spaces.

R. IRONSIDE

THE ARTISTIC VISION OF PROUST

A BELIEF in the moral function of æsthetic experience, one with which Proust's laborious study of Ruskin had made him familiar in a most passionate form, underlies the numerous reflections on the subject of art which recur throughout *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, strengthening as the book proceeds until finally, when the principal characters of the novel are standing shrivelled on the edge of the grave, so many spent phenomena, it takes on the proportions of a faith, spreading a timely light over the whole darkened situation; it is then made clear that the delights of æsthetic experience—and indeed, for the artist, the moral obligation to explore and preserve it, so that it is laid up as treasure, but so that he can, if he will, put his hands on it and display it formally, as in a monstrance—that these delights are what, in the last resort, prevent the solid ground failing beneath our feet, console us in the face of the vanity, proved in Proust's eyes, of human contacts. This is not unusual teaching; moreover we may question its validity in the context. Marcel, the hero of the novel, is a man in advanced middle age: at the moment when this conviction takes full possession of his mind; during a reception at the Hotel de Guermantes at which he is reintroduced to the circles he had frequented as a young man, he becomes startlingly aware that he has passed the age at which it could seem reasonable to hope for a fleeting liaison either with a débutante or with some 'jeune laitière,' that he cannot now re-enter the budding grove on any terms of equality with its familiar spirits. It is not surprising that this revelation should have encouraged him in the belief that more real, more rare satisfactions were to be sought from the sphere of art. There is an element of conventional disillusionment in his attitude which might tempt us to cast doubts on the impartiality of his belief; as Marcel would probably have admitted, further experience of the right kind might have so modified the state of his emotions as to cause him to reject it entirely. But we are not told that anything

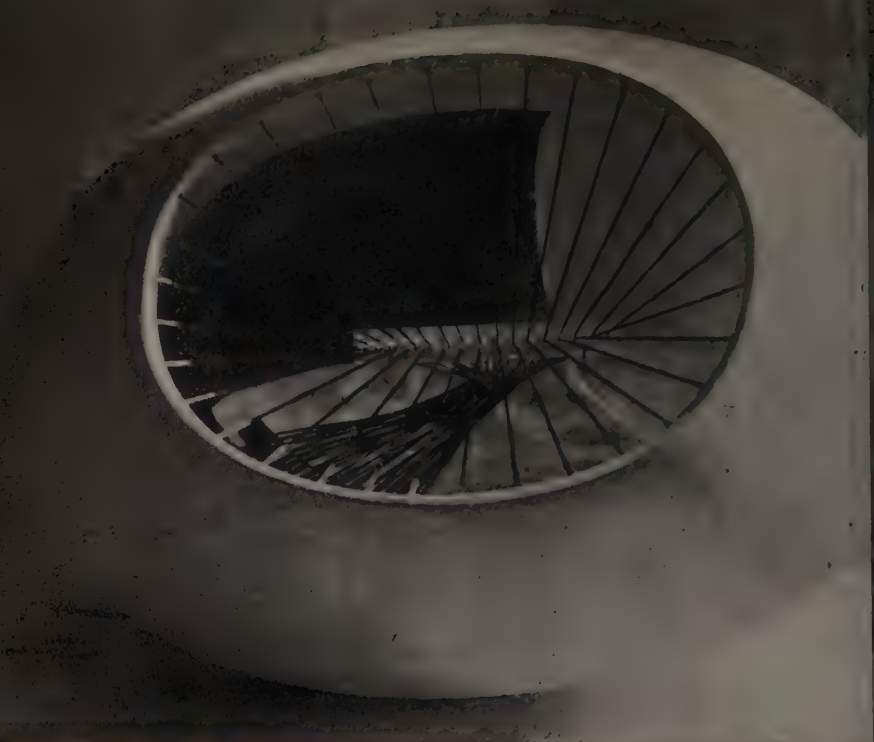
took place. Proust's own withdrawal from Society, whatever its subsidiary reasons, his entire, enduring absorption in the composition of his work at a parallel moment of his life would serve to confirm the view that he regarded his hero's state of mind at the Guermantes party as absolutely valuable. Any notion that the ravages of age, merely, prompted this awakening of faith must appear false in the light of the many 'monitory gleams and vital sounds' which are perceived by the hero in the region of his inner spirit, with increasingly delicious clarity as the subject develops, and which may be said to prepare the reader for the final illumination; so that it is rather a re-awakening, and a lesson which pierces the whole structure of the writer's researches, a house of life in which there are so many exotic mansions that the moral of its building, though it penetrates every one, is veiled by the brilliance of their appointments. The labyrinth of personages and events is laid out with such natural effect, lives so vividly and sharply that there is a case for belittling the long passages of repetitive argument and psychological botanization through which the author reaches his æsthetic conclusions; one would not, indeed, consider the intrigue of the book as the mere pretext for more abstract discussions. These, nevertheless, carry its principal messages. Mr. Derek Leon, in his recent critical biography of the writer, gives only a chapter to the 'world of art'. The more penetrating life by Pierre Quint, published before the whole of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* has been issued, has a section 'L'Art et le Sentiment du Divin', a more perspicacious title; but neither writer gives sufficient prominence, albeit among so much which deserves prominence, to Proust's positive belief in the saving graces of the arts. In this respect, the interest of his message does not lie in the somewhat commonplace affirmation that, having been crossed in love, having lost one's youth, having sounded the hollows of high society, there yet remain the crowning solace, the only worthy pleasures that life has to offer, the joys of æsthetic experience and artistic creation; the force and interest of Proust's claim upon our attention to his feelings in this matter must properly be founded upon his singular conception of the nature of such experience. Artists of most kinds and the hero's response to their works and characters fill vital sections of the book; their waxing and waning enchantment, their singleminded personalities, singleminded only in relation to the mercurial

gyrations of the less preoccupied characters, emerge, however uncertainly they may play this part at times, as rallying points for Marcel's spirits.

The work of the impressionist painter, Elstir, plays a peculiarly revealing role in the growth of Marcel's emotional attitude to the arts, his reactions to it being at once a premonition of the position in which he finally found himself and a confession that there was little in the prevailing vision of the time which accorded with his deepest impulses. It would be vain to attempt to identify Elstir with any one historical person even if Proust did not warn us that his characters were confected from observations directed according to his requirements—or, as often, by happy chance—upon those whom he knew either personally or by their works. It is, however, not difficult to recognize, in particular phases of Elstir's development, allusions to artists whose works may be seen in public galleries. His earliest-known paintings are those of mythological subjects, forming part of the collection of the Duchesse de Guermantes, in the examination of which Marcel became so absorbed that the company assembled in the drawing-room for dinner was kept waiting nearly three quarters of an hour. In these pictures, the Muses, for example, were seen as beings belonging to some now fossilized species, but who, one felt, in the remote past might have been seen in the evening threading their way along some mountain path; 'quelquefois un poète . . . (caractérisé par une certaine insexualité), se promenait avec une muse, comme dans la nature, des créatures d'espèces différentes mais amies et qui vont de compagnie'. It would seem that the prototype of this phase is Gustave Moreau, a probability which becomes a certainty when we read that 'Dans une de ces aquarelles, on voyait un poète épuisé d'une longue course en montagne qu'un centaure qu'il a rencontré, touché de sa fatigue, prend sur son dos'—a sufficiently exact description of Moreau's *Le Centaure et le Poète*. Smart society accepted and acquired examples of this early manner. As a youth who was about to win a welcome in such society by means of the precocious intellectual brilliance of his views, Marcel was able to feel that art of this kind had been superseded by Impressionism and to turn with a more lively admiration to works of Elstir's Impressionist period. There is no inconsequence in this development of the artist's talent; Degas' earliest pictures *Sémiramide*, for instance, or *Les Malheurs de la Ville*



L'AIGUILLE D'ÉTRETAT from a series by Claude Monet (see page 31)



SCULPTURE WITH COLOUR—BLUE AND RED by Barbara Hepworth

d'Orleans are equally and similarly remote in subject matter from his mature productions. The portrait of the actress, *Miss Sacripant* (Odette de Crecy in fancy dress), is evidently later, though Elstir is able to qualify it as merely a 'pochade de jeunesse'; the vicious and dreamy air of the sitter, 'l'attrait irritant qu'elle allait offrir aux sens blasés ou dépravés de certains spectateurs,' the independent and ambiguous interest of her somewhat piquant costume, the titillating quality of the technique of the picture which reminded Marcel, when he found it in Elstir's studio at Balbec, of the fur of a cat, the petals of a carnation, the feathers of a dove, these intriguing characteristics recall, as Albert Feuillerat has pointed out, certain portraits of Whistler. We are not, however, shown further examples of Elstir's work in precisely this manner, and the interest of Marcel's visit to the Balbec studio is concentrated upon the group of impressionist seascapes painted in that youthful, salubrious, poetic neighbourhood. These, one is bound to feel, are Monets; the lilac foam, the rocks seemingly of pink granite, the vapours of the shifting tide, the whole 'poudroiment de soleil et de vagues' could hardly be the product of another's vision. The fishing fleet of Elstir's *Port de Carquethuit* echoes the forest of masts in Monet's *Port de Honfleur* or *Port du Havre*; and that other canvas which renders, 'au pied des immenses falaises, la grâce liliputienne des voiles blanches sur le miroir bleu où elles semblaient des papillons endormis' must be a recollection of the same painter's series of the cliffs at Etretat. Shortly after the flight of Albertine, aspects of Marcel's vanished friend are vividly and painfully brought before him by two paintings, 'ou dans un paysage touffu il y a des femmes nues' and in one of which 'l'une des jeunes filles lève le pied. . . . De l'autre elle pousse à l'eau l'autre jeune fille qui gaiement résiste, la cuisse levée, son pied trempant à peine dans l'eau bleue', a scene which at once gives expression to Marcel's vision of Albertine's illicit passions and recalls the 'méandre de cou de cygne' of her thighs as she lay in bed beside him. The brief account we are given of these works suggests Renoir's large *Baigneuses* of 1885 and the lovely series of smaller canvasses of which it is the centrepiece. Yet this suggestion is interesting simply because it prompts us to pursue the image of Albertine and her laundress among Renoir's productions in this manner. At such a critical moment Marcel was in no fit state to ponder upon artistic quality, to form

opinions upon the trend of Elstir's painting by making comparisons between the bathers and the pictures he had studied at Balbec. The former, indeed, are introduced merely to sharpen the anguish of his bereft condition. At another stage, Elstir is revealed to us as the author of a series, which we may attribute to Degas, of works devoted to what then seemed the novel theme of woman 'surprise dans l'intime de sa vie, de tous les jours,' pictures which discover unsuspected graces in the movements of women doing their hair, drying themselves, warming their feet. That there was a distinct flavour of Degas in Elstir's composite style might already have been inferred from the enthusiasm with which he described to Marcel, on the occasion of the visit to the Balbec studio, the luminous spectacle of the racecourse. Yet his interest in this motif from modern life is surpassed by his admiration of the airy splendours of a regatta, bathed in the 'glaucque lumière d'un hippodrome marin,' as rich in the possibilities of exploitation, for a contemporary artist, as the ponderous magnificence of the nautical ceremonies of Venice for Carpaccio. This delight is, of course, Monet's; Degas' racecourses and jockeys are accessory, their role in Elstir's conversation being simply to amplify the general assertion that it is a vision of modern life which chiefly inspires the painter. The series of pictures showing women at their toilet is even less essential to Elstir's true significance in the story, serving primarily, indeed, to throw a surprising light on the capacities of Madame Verdurin, for it was she, we learn, who first suggested to Elstir this field of study and who had originally attracted his attention to many of the subjects from which he derived his happiest effects; Marcel recognized that Madame Verdurin considered herself to be a muse, but was shocked at his lack of perception on discovering that she had real grounds for this opinion. The art of Elstir is thus used, its characteristics multiplied, while it remains, in the broadest sense of the term, impressionist, to develop plots and touch up characters, without enlarging in any way our knowledge of Marcel's æsthetic response to it; it tells us, for instance, about the past of Odette de Crecy or the fashionable limits to the artistic tastes of the Guermantes. In what manner its qualities enriched Marcel's emotional life can only properly be studied with reference to the works of Elstir-Monet. Marcel's feelings about these pictures bore no relation to the attitude of

mind in which connoisseurs of impressionism so often indulge, that attitude which can regard a Renoir as a delicious morsel, or a Pissarro as if it exhaled the bouquet of some discreet but exquisite wine and that seems to shrink from the unfettered brilliance of the latest Monets, leaning upon the more obvious refinements of his early pictures. Marcel's reactions were of a more profound and even disturbing kind; Elstir certainly convinced him of those commonplaces in the criticism of impressionism, the beauties of the modern social scene, the elegance of contemporary dress and gestures, explained to him also that atmosphere and light properly apprehended can transfigure the ugliness of modern constructions so that their shapes seem quite subsidiary to the radiance they reflect. But such views could not have been immediately welcome to a devoted student of Ruskin, 'ce puissant cerveau'. They may have indirectly provoked Marcel's delight in the Trocadero, not, however, because he saw it catching, or refracting, or shimmering in, the light, but because it recalled the formal architecture in certain backgrounds of Mantegna; Marcel passionately loved the past, and his power of observing externals was as limited as his gift for exploring character was extensive and penetrating. He was thus ill-qualified to enjoy straightforwardly and simply the impressionist vision of the world, one which arose from the sensitivity of the artist's retina, from his acute perception of the most rapid moments of weather, the most transitory and instinctive of human movements, and was not one elaborated from the semi-conscious regions of personality. Marcel's individual judgment, however, would seem to class the Balbec seascapes as the fruits of some such subjective vision. For him, they presented a succession of metaphors, as in a poem, metaphors moreover of a sibylline character, almost misrepresentations, so that at first glance the reverse of their author's intentions was conveyed to the reader. Looking at the *Port de Carquethuit* he saw the masts of the boats moored at the jetty as so many pinnacles built on dry land, while the churches of Criquebec seemed to emerge from the water 'soufflées en albatre ou en écume et enfermées dans la ceinture d'un arc-en-ciel versicolore', a mystic and unreal picture. Elsewhere, in the same work, a boat which should have been sailing in mid-ocean appeared to be riding through the town; another, upon a sunlit stretch of water white with foam, seemed to be rising out of a field of snow; the ocean itself was part sky,

the sky part ocean. A palace mirrored in the water became under this transmuting lens, a symmetrical object, so deceptive was the identity between it and its reflection; in a similar fashion, the spires of a riverside town seemed to hold in suspense, like pendulums, the houses clustering beneath them. It was a world of mirages which, however, as Marcel was quick to realise, were evolved from certain optical tricks recurring in Nature for those whose eyes were sufficiently 'innocent' to perceive them. The absence of all apparent sequence between the causes and effects of such phenomena charmed his imagination. It was a source of delight to Marcel, conjuring up a sense of poetic correspondences, that nature and, indeed, human nature should so often prove to be the exact contrary of what it appeared to be, that the most bizarre and striking apparitions, the social conduct of Charlus, for instance, may be the result of some now uncommon natural accident. Elstir's work was, for him, composed from those rare moments '*ou l'on voit la nature telle qu'elle est, poétiquement*'. The design of the pictures, the dexterity of brushwork they revealed, the actual physical facts of the artist's translation of his vision were evidently quite subordinated considerations in Marcel's eyes; it was the reconciliation effected between the fantastic and the real that gave the key to their beauty. More than that of Degas, Pissarro, or Sisley, more even than that of Renoir, the painting of Monet may be explored in this somewhat romantic manner. He was the most Turnerian of the impressionists; his art springs from a deep well of poetry, a sense of ravished amazement at the unparalleled splendours of nature so that to many eyes his snowfields glow with an iridescence, his seas shine with a multitude of lights that, like the electric visions of Turner, are a reproach to the lovely effects they imitate. Yet we must suppose that Marcel, to whom the spectacle of nature was a heraldic field the signs of which were meaningless until they recalled some moment of his history (or until their symbolism seemed actually to press for an interpretation) could not have felt that impressionism in any of its forms fulfilled the secret demands of his temperament. We may even conclude that Marcel's admiration for impressionism contained an element of artificiality. He could not doubt that the growing prestige of its adherents was deserved; he could not fail to recognize that theirs was the major contribution of the time to the evolution of

painting, or indeed that such recognition would range him among an intellectual élite, even amid 'les cénacles qui préparent les apothéoses.' He, in fact, half surrenders before Elstir, before an art which set an absolute value upon appearances, those feelings which rose at uncertain intervals from the remote corners of his mind, which filled him with a sweetness and a beatitude which in the end he comes to identify with the material out of which a work of art is constructed.

These feelings were rare, though unfailingly recurring, visitants, filling moments of the greatest fecundity but also of the most fleeting brevity. The earliest to be recorded occurred at an unspecified period of Marcel's life. Persuaded by his mother to have tea, a meal he did not normally take, he mechanically dipped a *madeleine* into his cup; its taste, thus rendered warm and aromatic, its soft sodden texture, for no immediately apparent reason suffused his being with a mysterious and intense delight, under the influence of which the ephemeral character of human existences, their trials and vicissitudes seemed, as in love, quite illusory; it was like the galvanization of a sixth sense, a light inside him which he struggled vainly to retain, but not without recalling the previous occasions on which he had eaten such cakes dipped in tea, when as a child, at Combray, his aunt offered him this humble delicacy Sunday mornings. With this realization, and conjured, so to speak, from his teacup, the scene of his life at Combray swam into the orbit of his inner vision, but bathed in an extraordinary clarity, in an atmosphere of vibrant sweetness, which rocked his senses. A surprising succession of such revelations crowded upon him during the brief interval which elapsed between the moment he entered the Hotel de Guermantes—as a middle-aged guest at the final and most bizarre of the social functions which mark such revealing phases of the author's plot—and his appearance in the Guermantes' drawing-room, so that the piazzetta at Venice, the seaside life of Balbec, its large modernistic hotel in which his heart had suffered such critical experiences, rose up before his face, in a new and exquisite guise, threatening the very existence of the Hotel de Guermantes which swung out of view like the scenery on a revolving stage. Marcel stumbled between the present and the past in a state of uncertainty 'pareille à celle qu'on éprouve devant une vision ineffable au moment de s'endormir'. Hitherto, he had been content to accept, without

analysing, these ravishing apparitions. On this occasion, an ageing man who had cultivated excessively the pleasures and passions of social and personal relations, he set himself to probe the source of a delight which he felt to be infinitely more valuable. He found that this arose from the identity between the past and the present momentarily effected through the agency of some quite trivial but evocative incident, such as that quoted of his eating a cake dipped in tea. The evocation was seen to be extra-temporal and consequently unsullied by the host of attendant circumstances which, in *time*, sway our impressions of things and people. It must furthermore be an evocation of something already existing—but normally irrevocable—in the hidden seams of Marcel's memory—for whom it represented an automatic '*retour aux profondeurs*'. Marcel was thus himself at such moments freed from the narrow restrictions of time. '*Une minute affranchie de l'ordre du Temps*' Proust wrote '*a recrée en nous, pour la sentir l'homme affranchi de l'ordre du temps*'. In these conditions, he was able to recapture the quintessence of the impressions made upon him by Combray, Balbec or Venice, unalloyed by the transient moods in which he may originally have received them. To make contact with a pure and timeless reality, '*l'essence permanente et habituellement cachée des choses*'. To examine, to penetrate, to wring out to the last drop these fleeting perceptions of truth, and then to find for them a communicable equivalent, to achieve this, he felt, was to create a work of art. Imagination, we are told, was his only means of enjoying beauty; but since one can only imagine what is absent, this means could not be applied to the realities of daily life—a law of nature which was now mystically dissolved in that peculiar clairvoyance which by a process of association enabled him simultaneously to imagine and to perceive, in fact to scent the air of paradise, because the only true paradise is paradise lost, the paradise that is recreated in tranquility, so that 'the tardy sand of time runs golden and the soul expands'. Marcel's faith in the exclusive powers of the

¹ A. Feuillerat (*Comment Marcel Proust a Composé son Roman*) records an interview granted to the journalist, E.-J. Bois, in 1913, in which Proust affirms the essential importance, in his work, of this conviction; Feuillerat goes on to show that Proust later tended increasingly to interpolate long passages of a purely intellectual and critical nature, a tendency probably attributable to the influence of Balzac.

imagination as the instrument of æsthetic perception was in effect a faith in the power of inspiration. The heart was more precious than the head, emotion more beautiful than calculation. 'L'intelligence ne peut trouver le temps perdu'. The truths revealed by the imagination were deeper, he was convinced, than any which might be grasped by the intelligence. Intellectuals are incapable of deducing the beauty of a work of art from the beauty of an image. So-called realism in art, which required the artist to leave his ivory tower, to apply his mind to the description of life as it was lived around him was an utterly false notion. Nothing is more remote from reality than a mere abstract of the lines and surfaces of things. It is gross and mistaken to attempt to discover in matter the intrinsic realities which reside only in the spirit, the sole sphere of reality for each one of us being our own sensibilities. Marcel's were most delicately strung, most receptive under the influence of those miraculous associations the effects of which have been described. He found, however, also, that kindred moments were sometimes vouchsafed to him which were not the fruit of any link with his vanished years. A cloud, a pebble, a flower, and, on one elaborately described occasion, the church towers of Martinville, were capable of suddenly compelling his regard, so that he felt them to be hieroglyphics concealing some precious image of truth which urgently required to be deciphered. While aware that Providence was, in the last resort, the purveyor of these riches, Marcel determined to live in constant watch for them. The spectacle of Proust in impassioned contemplation of a rose tree 'in total communion with Nature, with art, with life' has been recorded by Reynaldo Hahn who often, in Proust's company, assisted at similar scenes when the writer's 'whole being seemed to be concentrated upon a transcendent work of penetration,'¹ straining to fathom the quintessential nature of the object of his attention, waiting for that involuntary light which would uncover its esoteric beauties. It was always his desire that a simple aspect of nature inwardly observed, might prove to be a 'vase rempli de parfum, de sons, de moments, d'humeurs variées, de climats'. The final explanation of the nature of this compelling quest might well, Marcel thought, only be forthcoming in another world the presentiment of which is what moves us most both in

¹Quoted and translated from *Hommage à Marcel Proust* by Havelock Ellis (*From Rousseau to Proust*).

art and in life. That the text of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* is set with jewels of observation mined in this mysterious way we cannot doubt. The consistent beauty of Proust's imagery more than justifies the importance he attached to his method; an anthology of the passages of prose poetry in the book, such as has been made of the more rhapsodical pages in Ruskin, would compose a treasury of most illuminating metaphor and simile. Descriptions of nature or states of mind are strewn with sudden phrases or fragments of phrases which 'wrinse and ring the ear', so startle our vision, are evidently so just that we in fact feel a previously hidden truth has been delivered to us. Through the perpetually open windows of a Venetian hotel 'l'ombre tiede et le soleil verdâtre filaient comme sur une surface flottante et évoquaient le voisinage mobile, l'illumination, la miroitante instabilité du flot'. The smell of petrol, recalling excursions at Balbec, 'faisait fleurir, maintenant, de chaque côté de moi, bien que je fusse dans ma chambre obscure, les bleuets, les coquelicots et les trèfles incarnats, m'enivrait comme une odeur de campagne . . . une odeur devant quoi fuyaient les routes, changeait l'aspect du sol, accouraient les châteaux, palissait le ciel, se décuplaient les forces, une odeur qui était comme un symbole de bondissement et de puissance . . .' Proust's memories of Marcel's grief for the loss of Albertine are charged with such poetic intuitions; 'Que le jour est lent à mourir' he writes 'les soirs demesurés de l'été . . . mais dans la porte de l'escalier . . . la partie vitrée était translucide et bleue, d'un bleu de fleur, d'un bleu d'aile d'insecte, d'un bleu qui m'eut semble beau si je n'avais senti qu'il était un dernier reflet coupant comme un acier, un coup suprême que dans sa cruauté infatigable me portait encore le jour'. Such quotations, necessarily chosen at random where the choice is so wide, cannot but be unsatisfactory samples of the atmosphere of poetry, even of unction, which floats through Proust's elaborate style and lingers especially where he is crystallising those automatic relationships between memory and sensation which were for him the vials of delicate but absolute truths.

This process of establishing links, 'rapports', between objects often mediocre in themselves and whole phases of past experience, of extracting a train of associations from, say, a spray of flowers growing alongside the railway or a pebble, is a surrealist one; it is an exploitation of the stirrings of the sub-conscious mind. The

reality pursued is not the reality we normally recognize as such, but a super-reality which cannot be grasped by the intellect until it has been involuntarily absorbed by the imagination. One would not, however, identify the visionary elements in Proust with the standardized Surrealism which rigidly adheres, like Byzantine art, to a now well known set of images; it might be more precise to consider him as a protagonist of the more elastic 'surnaturalisme' of Gerard de Nerval whose *Sylvie* he greatly admired. Yet he was certainly intimately engaged in the same spheres of the mind as those the Surrealists of to-day may be said to have popularized and his interpretation of appearances is often akin to theirs. To affirm, as Proust does, that by the juxtaposition of two different objects, by the establishment of a bond of union between them so that they are freed from the contingencies of time, an artist may extract their essential significance, is to make a characteristically Surrealist claim. Dreams, Proust further discovers, provide fertile examples of such juxtapositions; he determines to be attentive to this nocturnal muse. Logical unity in a work of art he also rejects; he recognizes a vital unity in great works of art, but considers it to be an automatic attribute the value of which may not dawn upon the artist until his task is approaching completion. Metaphor and simile are less the instruments of style than real features of the objects which inspire them; Giotto's angels in the Arena Chapel he conceives as 'les volatiles d'une espèce particulière' which must have been listed in the Natural Histories of biblical and apostolic times. He values things for the sum of associations they may offer; his pianola, for instance, is a 'lanterne magique, scientifique (historique et géographique)'. He loves the great painters of the past not for their draughtsmanship or colour but because the mysterious courtisans of Carpaccio or Rembrandt's Bathsheba are absolutely original figures from a world existing in their author's mind and not elsewhere, the expression of which makes possible a 'communication des âmes' such as Marcel felt to have been effected as he listened to Vinteuil's quartet. Without pausing to examine in detail the *intellectual* truths which Proust evolved from his conscious memory and which are embodied in his vast story of the society and individuals amongst whom Marcel moved, we can say that Proust's observation of his characters was also touched by surrealism; they develop in a

surprising and hazardous manner, are linked by fantastic coincidences, each has a hundred masks, a vital but never a logical unity; they are multiple images and are the more persuasively alive inasmuch as Proust succeeds in establishing a sort of irrational but inevitable relationship between the various inconsistent aspects they assume, a relationship which is convincing because the characters are composed without reference to other data than those provided by Proust's personal impressions; their unity is that of Proust's, of a single individual's, private vision. They can have their original being elsewhere no more than Carpaccio's courtisans, Elstir's roses or Rembrandt's old women can have taken shape outside the painters' imagination. It is the quality of art to prolong their existence in responsive minds; and in this sense art may be considered a superior language whereby what is essential and essentially valuable in a personality—a Ruskinian conception—may be communicated to others; and only in this sense may it cease to be true that 'l'homme est l'être qui ne peut sortir de soi, qui ne connaît les autres qu'en soi'. Thus since Proust's characters are created from a sum of personal impressions, we find that, where his emotions are strongly engaged, such impressions become so blurred in the dark room of his affections that the characters no longer have any recognizable human attributes. Marcel's unhappy love for Albertine so profoundly modifies his perception of her as a human being that she never properly emerges in this form. We are led to think of her as a winged, amphibian creature, an impalpable, magic essence or simply as a self-generating agony of mind. When he caressed her it was as if he was handling 'une pierre qui enferme la saline des océans immémoriaux ou le rayon d'une étoile', as if her bodily presence was the closed envelope of a being holding limitless horizons mysteriously within itself. It was not the possession of her physical attractions or even of the charm of her personality that he sought so urgently and vainly, but rather the tones of that music only to be heard in the silence of the blood when 'all the pulses in their multitude image the trembling calm of summer seas.' She was, indeed, so entirely the creature of his dolorous fantasy, it was so fortuitously that his anguished desires had settled upon her that Proust could not truthfully present her to his reader in any other manner; her portrait, a surrealist one, appears to be the manifestation of a neurosis.

The figure of Elstir is clearly inadequate as the exponent of Proust's æsthetic 'doctrines' as they finally emerge. We cannot doubt that he was an impressionist painter, but we can deny that the æsthetic doctrine of the impressionists accorded in any way with Proust's most earnest feelings on this subject. One is bound to regret the revelations the reader would surely have enjoyed, if the art of Elstir had been composed not of fragments chiefly from Monet and from Degas and Renoir, but, instead, from Picasso, Klee, Chagall and Ernst. His conception of the springs of beauty must be considered as nourished upon Ruskin from whose voluminous meditations, from whose enthusiasms and aversions may be extracted a pervasive opinion that art is the language of the imagination, an opinion which took root in Proust's mind and which, under the light of his own imaginative experience, grew to embrace an automatic psychological symbolism (related to surrealism), by means of which imaginative truths were conveyed to him; though he by no means despised the unaided workings of the intellect, his admiration of these was qualified by his knowledge that inspiration was too spasmodic to support alone the task he had set himself. But inspiration, as he conceived it, however elusive, remained the fountain of beauty and there was a duty to pursue it far into the heart. Without necessarily accepting the spontaneous visions of the imagination as absolutely true, we may well question the integrity of any conscious art which sets forth to be the impartial historian of the times, the organ of a social or political ideal or simply to make an honest record of the nature which confronts it. It is misleading to pursue beauty or its enjoyment as providing an attractive means of achieving some practical end. The propagandist and the realist have no satisfactions or consolations to offer; too often they merely add to the petty dust with which we are daily choked. The gift they possess is at the mercy of circumstances, they cannot exercise it with complete liberty—disadvantages under which the life of the imagination does not suffer, whose pleasures are largely in memory and whose ambitions are above the violent distractions of human movements. During the last war, Proust noted that '*ceux qui se sont faits une vie intérieure ambiante ont peu d'égard à l'importance des événements*'. He would not now hold the same view, yet the intermittent lights of the imagination remain a source of inspiration and solace under whose beams the

weight of unintelligible events is lightened; they will always provide the surest material for a work of art. Proust remarks, in this connection, how a soft wind laden with the scent of mignonette or, on another occasion, a bird singing in the Parc de Montboissier, because they touch a chord in Chateaubriand's memory, inspire pages in the *Memoires d'Outre-Tombe* of greater beauty than any dealing with the great occurrences of the Revolution and the Empire. We should cultivate those moments when the visible scene takes possession of us unawares, when silent harmonies, nursed by our memory, suddenly sound regardless of the external conditions in which we find ourselves; they are intimations of a timeless reality within us in contact with which 'we have sight'. Proust might have claimed, 'of that immortal sea which brought us hither' and birth and death are of no consequence; Proust's imaginative processes are indeed curiously related to those sublimations of memory which flashed upon Wordsworth's inner eye in solitude. He might have described them in Wordsworth's words as creating a state in which

'. . . the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul.'

It is out of such mysterious situations, that is to say, from inspiration, that great art is evolved, and it is in the revelation of the artist's sense of beatitude, of the features of the transfigured, super-real world thus disclosed—the image exclusively of the core of his personality—that his genius and our delight in it reside.

This essay is the first of a series of revaluations of great artists which will include *Baudelaire* by Martin Turnell, *Balzac* by Raymond Mortimer, *Henry James* by Logan Pearsall Smith, *Beardsley* by A. J. A. Symons, and *Finnegan's Wake* by Frank Budgen.

HUGH KINGSMILL

J. M. BARRIE

IN the course of his rectorial address at St. Andrews, Barrie said: 'Don't put your photographs at all ages into your autobiography. That is a tragic mistake. My Life; and What I have Done With It. That is the sort of title, but it is the photographs that give away what you have done with it. Grim things these portraits; if you could read the language of them you would often find it unnecessary to read the book.'

Barrie's latest photographs—I remember one of him at Kirriemuir, which he had visited in connection with some Barrie celebration—show extreme wretchedness; but even in his early forties there is no trace of happiness in his face. Mr. Denis Mackail gives an excellent photograph of him at this time, as a frontispiece to his biography (*The Story of J. M. B. A Biography* by Denis Mackail. Peter Davies. 11s. 6d.). In spite of a high forehead and fine eyes, and a general delicacy of structure which indicates unusual intelligence and sensibility, the total effect is chilling. It is a hard resentful face, the face of someone whose sympathy and tenderness are turned in on himself, and for whom other people exist only as ministers to his own self-love and self-pity. There are as many kinds of egotism as of human beings. Barrie's was the most insistent and pervasive of all, the kind which is found only in those whom the Victorians called 'mother's darlings', and who are nowadays said to be suffering from a mother-complex.

What Barrie and his mother were really like together must be a matter of conjecture. He has portrayed her in *Margaret Ogilvy*, where he pictures himself, after the death of a brother, trying to comfort his mother by standing on his head. 'I suppose I was an odd little figure. I have been told that my anxiety to brighten her gave my face a strained look . . . but she did laugh suddenly now and then, whereupon I screamed exultingly to that dear sister who was ever waiting to come and see the sight, but by the time she came the dear face was wet again.' Clearly the reality of Kirriemuir is not here. David Barrie, James's father, was a working-man, he had a large family, and his wife's favourite child was James, in whom she recognized talents through which

she would be able to enjoy, if only vicariously, a better life than she had known as the wife of a poor Scotch weaver. Beneath the surface of *Margaret Ogilvy* one is conscious of the implacable self-love which mother and son pooled for their mutual benefit, to the dumb discomfiture of the father.

Spoilt children get on quickly in the world, for most people conform to the attitude expected of them; and the child who is given what he cries for at six will usually be given what he asks for at thirty. In his middle twenties Barrie was already doing well as a journalist in London, and two or three years later, having by this time mastered the technique of presenting Kirriemuir to southern readers, he became famous with *A Window in Thrums*, of which *Punch* wrote:

Let pessimists potter and pule, and let savages slaughter and harry:

Give me Hendry and Tammass and Jess, and a smile and a tear
born of Barrie.

But however quickly fame and money had come to Barrie, they would have come too slowly to escape his bitterness at their delay. The most revealing of his works, one which in later years he did his best to keep out of the way of possible readers, is *Better Dead*, a satirical fantasy written in 1886, when he was still unknown, except to the editors who were looking after him. It is the story of a young Scot, Andrew Riach, who, leaving his native place, Wheens, and its imbecile or depraved inhabitants, comes to London, where finding it impossible to earn money honestly, he scrapes along by lending himself to petty devices for boosting actors, papers and so on. His nausea at life grows, he jabs at passers-by in the streets, and reproves a mother for shrieking when her child slips from her arms to the pavement. Then he meets the President of a Society for Doing Without Some People, the aim of which is to assassinate the chief public figures of the day, Rosebery, Randolph Churchill, Chamberlain, Stead, Bradlaugh and many others. Andrew becomes an enthusiastic member, pleads for the inclusion of the leading writers, Tennyson, Browning and Ruskin, and goes on to urge that no one over forty-five should be spared. Andrew, however, has a neck which appeals to the strangling impulses in the President, and the story ends with Andrew's flight, and return to Wheens, where we leave

him married to one of the more imbecile natives, and regarding his two children with a strong desire to crack their skulls together.

Better Dead corresponds in Barrie's work to *The Voyage to the Houyhnhnms* in Swift's, but it contains no sage horses and honest enduring Gulliver to balance the Yahoos. It must have been obvious to Barrie that if he was to live and prosper, there was nothing for it but to deal very drastically with his Yahoos, scrapping most of them and disguising the rest in fancy costumes. For day-dreaming he had a natural aptitude, and henceforth he called upon this faculty to provide the sugar coating for his pills. Much of this falsification was deliberate; he was resolved to be famous and wealthy, and thought the public deserved to be given what it was contemptible enough to desire. But his day dreams were also for his own consolation. As Mr. Mackail points out, Barrie was always dramatising himself, playing some part which he hoped would charm, impress or intimidate others, as the occasion required. Once, for example, feeling that he had been badly treated by his producer, Frohman, Barrie, to quote Mr. Mackail, 'drifted off towards stoicism or simulated indifference—and examining himself again saw that they weren't altogether unbecoming. They made him more mysterious and baffling to the onlookers. He liked that. It put them, however tall they were, at an unmistakable disadvantage. This had always been one of his best parts.'

His first experiments in sweetening his experience for public consumption were relatively mild, and one of them, *My Lady Nicotine*, was a delightful book, which has the same place in Barrie's work as *The Pickwick Papers* in Dickens's. Each was written when its author was just becoming famous, and each has a lightness of heart not felt before or after. There is, of course, no comparison in comic genius, but Barrie's group of journalists, bound together by a common love for the Arcadia smoking mixture, play their parts very amusingly in what Barrie might have called Butterfly Street, for that it was the real Grub Street he would hardly at that date have had the hardihood to maintain. Thirty years later, in his rectorial address on Courage, his powers of make-believe had become equal to anything. This is how he pictures his entry into Fleet Street, where during his first year he earned three hundred pounds—'The greatest glory that has ever come to me was to be swallowed up in London, not knowing a

soul, with no means of subsistence, and the fun of working till the stars went out. To have known anything would have spoilt it. I didn't even quite know the language. I rang for my boots and they thought I said a glass of water, so I drank the water and worked on. There was no food in the cupboard, so I didn't need to waste time in eating. . . . Oh, to be a freelance of journalism again—that darling jade! Those were days. Too good to last.'

In the middle nineties, while he was still working the Kirriemuir mine, two Free Church ministers, Ian Maclaren and S. R. Crockett, came forward with their own samples of Scotch humour and pathos. Maclaren's *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush* had a sale of three quarters of a million, and Crockett's *The Stickit Minister*, which was quickly followed by two more best-sellers, enabled Crockett to leave the ministry. Apart from a reasonable annoyance at having his market invaded, Barrie must have felt the complicated chagrin of a man who sees a fake article of his own invention successfully imitated. Later he was to have the same experience with *Peter Pan*; but if the public didn't mind who Peter Pandered to them, what could he do? Useless to warn them that his fakes were the only genuine ones, that was a nuance beyond their understanding.

He had, however, the satisfaction of leaving Scotland on Maclaren and Crockett's hands, after George Douglas had blown Scotch sentiment off the best-selling map in *The House with the Green Shutters*. By 1902 Barrie had two plays, neither on Scotch themes, running simultaneously, *Quality Street* and *The Admirable Crichton*. The first ran for fourteen months, the second for ten.

The mood of the prosperous classes in the decade of Barrie's stage triumphs was uncomfortable and apprehensive. The nineteenth century was over, and they were waiting for the bill to be presented. The poor were dissatisfied, women were dissatisfied, and with each year it became more obvious that Germany was dissatisfied, too. It was no longer possible to dismiss unpleasant problems in the brusque Victorian fashion as 'matters better left undiscussed'. But there was room for someone who could lighten doubts and tremors with humour, or ease them into tears. This was Barrie's cue, though it must be admitted that in *The Admirable Crichton* he took risks which no skill less accomplished than his could have prevented from wrecking the play as a popular success. Most people know the story. A yachtful of aristocrats is wrecked

on a desert island, and the butler, Crichton, the only man among a number of males, takes charge, becomes the master of the island, and signifies his intention to make the earl's daughter his wife. The party is rescued, the butler steps down of his own free will from the autocracy he had enjoyed, and the play ends with him back in his old job. Among the men, apart from Crichton, there is not one who is not either an imbecile or a coward, or both. Yet the stalls followed this democratic manifesto without a murmur. Barrie, who is reported to have said that the stalls wouldn't stand an ending in which Crichton was still the master, knew that they would not identify themselves with the particular wasters on the stage, and that so long as the social system was turned right side up again at the close they would find nothing to complain about. But to be on the safe side, he made Crichton himself rebuke the Earl's daughter for saying that there must be something wrong with England, when the best man on an island had to be a servant at home. 'My lady, not even from you can I listen to a word against England'.

An additional safeguard was the relatively flattering picture of the aristocratic women. In Barrie, as in Shaw, the women have very much the best of it. Shaw's Candida, and Maggie in *What Every Woman Knows*, are the Edwardian wife as she liked to imagine herself, and as the Edwardian husband, sitting beside her in the stalls or dress circle, was willing, for the sake of domestic harmony, to concede her to be—no Victorian doll or angel in the house, but shrewd, humorous, realistic, infinitely tolerant of the vanities and follies of the big baby, her husband, always allowing him his own way, and always seeing to it that his way was also hers.

Another symptom of the age, one much nearer to the centre of Barrie's nature than any form of feminine or democratic aspiration, was the longing to escape, back to childhood or to any far off region, actual or imaginary, an island in the South Seas, a Wellsian Utopia, no matter what, so long as it was distant and different. In *Peter Pan* Barrie made his most successful, and, for the light it throws both on Barrie and his age, his most interesting contribution to this need. The play opens in a nursery in a London middle-class home. There are three children, the eldest being a girl, Wendy; there are the father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Darling; and there is a nurse, who is a Newfoundland dog. Peter Pan,

a kind of changeling, arrives from The Never-Never Land, an island with a lagoon where mermaids bask. He spirits the children away to this island, there are adventures with a gang of pirates, who are finally massacred by Peter Pan and his devoted band, and the play ends with the return of the children to their London home, where Mr. Darling has taken up his quarters permanently in the kennel of the Newfoundland dog. Mrs. Darling offers to adopt Peter Pan, but he refuses. 'I want always to be a little boy and to have fun', he says.

It is a whimsical production, not only in the current sense, but in the original sense of arbitrary and capricious—a fantasy written by as well as about a spoilt child. Barrie had a dog he was fond of, so the nurse has to be a dog. At times, no doubt, he wished he could change places with his dog, so he puts Mr. Darling into a kennel. The play is on this level throughout; there is not a breath of fresh air, not a natural or beautiful moment in the whole concoction. Every effect is a stage effect, designed with the audience in mind, as in the notorious close of Act IV—'She says—she says she thinks she could get well again if children believed in fairies!' (*He rises and throws out his arms he knows not to whom perhaps to the boys and girls of whom he is not one.*) 'Do you believe in fairies? Say quick that you believe! If you believe, clap your hands!'

Such was the fare offered to Edwardian children, and approved by Edwardian parents. A hundred years had passed since *The Fairchild Family*, with its hell for spoilt children and its strict prudential morality. Surfeited with Mammon, the world was beginning to pine for Mars, without knowing it, at least in England. 'I want always to be a little boy and to have fun' sounded rather pretty and touching in 1904, and every one was captivated by Peter's gallant duel with the pirate chief, and applauded the reeking swords of his boy followers. Since then there has been a plethora of little boys who want to have fun, and now even such an adult as Mr. Fairchild would be a relief after the Peter Pan of Berchtesgaden.

Wendy loves the fearless, fascinating Peter, but Peter cares only for himself. That Barrie saw himself as Peter, and was on the whole gratified by the sight, is clear throughout the play, but at the close the pretences beneath which he tries to hide his bewilderment and unhappiness dissolve, though only for a moment.

Wendy tries to embrace Peter, and Peter draws back. 'It has something to do with the riddle of his being' Barrie explains in a stage direction, and, referring to Peter's earlier cry 'To die will be an awfully big adventure,' continues, 'If he could get the hang of the thing his cry might become, "To live would be an awfully big adventure!" but he can never quite get the hang of it, and so no one is as gay as he.'

The taste for Barrie's Never-Never Lands lasted till the end of the Great War, and in *Dear Brutus* and *Mary Rose* he provided audiences which had found Mars no more satisfying than Mammon with other worldly fare light enough for their state of acute spiritual dyspepsia. Meanwhile he was becoming increasingly wretched. For many years after *Peter Pan* his annual income was between thirty and forty thousand pounds, and as he saw more of the upper classes his feeling against them became transformed into an equally strong feeling in their favour. Having adopted the sons of an old friend, he sent them to Eton. 'Your great English public schools—I never feel myself a foreigner in England except when trying to understand them,' he said in a speech. '. . . I am like a dog looking up wistfully at its owner, wondering what that noble face means, or if it does have a meaning.' Each year, Mr. Mackail writes, he continued to expand 'his contacts with the big names in politics and any number of the more decorative names in society'; and when Lady Cynthia Asquith became his private secretary, it gave him, according to Mr. Mackail, enormous and lasting pleasure to think that his secretary was the daughter of an earl. There is a poignant comment on all this in his diary, when he was sixty-two—'It is as if long after writing "P. Pan" its true meaning came to me. Desperate attempts to grow up but can't.'

More than ten years after this entry, he tried with another *Peter Pan* to recapture the public favour he had now lost; but *The Boy David*, with Elisabeth Bergner as David, was not what the public needed at the close of December 1936. The Abdication had just taken place, the Crystal Palace was in ruins, the shadow of Hitler was rising behind the still formidable substance of Mussolini, and England was feeling in a very bad way. But though confused and uncertain about nearly everything, she most decidedly did not think she could get well again if children believed in fairies.

ROGER ROUGHTON

THE HUMAN HOUSE

'It is impudent, it is impertinent in the young to try to teach their fellows and elders', said the young man. It had grown so dark in his big room that we could not see his features at all; probably this only made it easier for him to speak.

'It is impertinent in us,' he went on, 'but there are times when it may be allowed. We listen to our elders because of their experience, and also perhaps because of their nearness to death; but to-day the toothless baby is as near to death as the toothless crone. And experience of some sort, of a bitter sort, is all too common to most of us (and it has always been so); nevertheless if we speak to you, it must be only with perfect humility, with anything less than that it would be better not to speak at all. Above all it is essential to stamp out any trace of the "prig", for this mean, inaccurate creature is rightly more condemned than the whirling villain. Can it be done? I am fearful: too great consciousness, or rather seemingly too great consciousness of our own displays is one of the faults of our own age.

'To me an idea seems like an omelette. In my head, in my frying-pan, I know there is a fine omelette. And I am desperately anxious to serve it unbroken before you; and not only unbroken, but perfectly cooked, elegantly displayed; elegance has its place, of course, food elegantly served tastes better, I said I know it is a fine omelette: that is, I know the eggs were first-rate, I also feel their cooking, their blending, was good; but equally I know that I shall fail in the serving, the omelette will be mutilated. I should like to wait thirty or forty years before trying such a delicate operation, but it is already growing late, it is quite dark.

'First, live only by love. Oh, don't misunderstand those words at all; don't confuse love with any of its substitutes, which turn sour because they are adulterated. No, do not deceive yourselves, nothing less than absolute truth and absolute honesty will satisfy. It is certain that there is no life but this life, and there are no forces but natural forces; it is probable that the mind is purely a physical mind.

'There can be no dispute about it, the thought of death is the most poignant thought on earth. And the first to realize the mortality of man must have felt an icy and almost intolerable loneliness close to madness. Yet in a sense that first doubter sowed a tiny seed of doubt in the mind of every living person. Was there ever a time when there was no doubter?

'Does the acceptor of mortality suffer more than the believer in a second life? As a child I did not believe in a second life, I simply disbelieved in my own death: a child is the centre of the world, it is very, very hard for him to believe in death. And to-day we have taught millions of children to believe in death before we have taught them to read the shining future. We have taught them by our war; and this is one of our greatest crimes, even if it were the only crime we had ever committed it would still be too much for any one of us singly to bear.

'The acceptor then will not suffer more, unless his knowledge stops short at that negative point. For there is an immortality, the immortality of the physical world.

'Belief in mortality and disbelief in the supernatural came to me side by side, as they will to most. But this meant no sorrow at all: the supernatural has an overwhelming rival in the natural; better than the superhuman is the human.

'Shun mysticism. There are no short cuts to love, though there are paths treacherously so signposted. Mysticism is pipe-dreaming, at the worst it kills sense, at the best "it doesn't do much harm." But better not to live at all, than be content to stand aside; if once you try to take no part, unanswerable logic will drive you back into the forest; and there, when your pince-nez is broken, you will knock your head against the trees.

'The human mind is probably entirely physical (I would say "certainly", I am as certain as I can be, but to anticipate knowledge is suspicious!). The first feeling at this thought is not poignant but indignant: "What nineteenth century nonsense!" people cry, "what crude materialism, what outmoded mechanistic cant!" This indignation is only possible if you despise nature. But to me this "theory", seems on the contrary not to debase the mind, but to lift up the body. At the thought of it the human race, all nature, all the physical world, seems still a million times more wonderful.

'But this is for others to discuss, with learning. For myself I feel sure it is so; but whether it is so or not, makes not a scrap

of difference to the need for love. If in the crudest sense every emotion, every creative feeling, every flight of fancy, could be controlled by electric switches, the moral code would remain exactly as all-important as it always has been. Because not only the mental, but *the moral and the physical are one*.

'This is no new idea, of course; thousands felt towards it in the last century; but to too many it was actually distorted into its opposite, it took on a cruel and destructive face, it became "everything is lawful". But this is the same pit that its opponents fall into, it is only the contempt for nature once again.' Here the young man paused: at times it was hard for us to hear all that he said, there was such a constant noise blowing up from the street. After a time he went on, speaking hurriedly:

'There are a million million years ahead of us, but it may be that I have only five minutes left to speak.

'Remember there are a hundred counterfeits to every one true coin in circulation to-day; there is even a story that it is not love we wish to live by, but hate; we can laugh at that, already two hundred million can disprove it by their lives. Avoid those who speak of indiscriminate love; they are counterfeit, and you will find them, at the very moment when real love stands up, to be the most insensate haters. Only those who hate evil know how to love.

'There is only inferiority, there is no superiority to mankind. The higher you reach the closer you will come to the heart of mankind. Lenin and his great successor are in their very greatness bound tight to the human heart. The great writers, the painters, the composers, the builders, the scientists are bound there by their courageous love and their understanding love. Realism is the highest point in the world.

'Cowardice then will cut you off from the rest, and so will idleness: to work is natural. We have to be very careful in using these general terms, they have been abused so often that all have grown suspicious. Peace and plenty, we cry, and have heard our own words so often that we hardly realize their meaning. But we shall have not only freedom from fighting each other (how ridiculous it will soon seem that so negative a blessing needed to be mentioned), we shall have peace in our life, where none may take from another (that is the first peace), and peace, coming more slowly, from disease, until perhaps we shall even have peace from death. And the plenty will be infinitely more than plenty of food

and comfort, good though that is; above all it will be plenty for the mind. Again and again it is the same thing, ultimately all is inseparately bound up together.

‘But we can begin to read the future in the past and present; never despise the past: look on it in admiration and humility, learn from it; learn from its faults, naturally, but above all learn from its achievements, which are far greater.

‘Remember this, we shall build up whole new worlds of joy; we shall strip truth bare in all her perfection, the giving and taking of pleasure, the satisfaction of desire will be raised to an incredible pitch; but we may never express one particular piece of truth more absolutely than, for instance, it was sung in a country song a thousand years ago. The past is permanent, there is no break, only transformation.

‘And so with the dark present: Many will die evil, think of the sorrow of that. But think also of the multitudes of good and innocent around us. I think of one who for more than thirty years has been fighting for our future; to-day he is locked in a cell for his goodness.

‘For a long time I have distrusted those among us whose outlook is wholly emotional; I distrust them still. But never let your distrust of false emotion stifle true emotion. Lack of emotion, though, is not a vice, it is a terrible disease. Look with infinite pity on those who are cursed by it, help them if you can.

‘Cowardice, laziness, lack of love, all vices and diseases cut us off from the rest of the world. But equally their opposites bind us close again. My cowardice and weakness are such that my whole life has been a denial of all that I know to be good; and at the darkest times I turn away and drink myself insensible, until the sky turns green. But at another time I can remember that none can be completely cut off: like all but a handful, I have been loved, and I have loved, and no matter whatever else has happened and may happen, that is there so that nothing can change it.

‘You will hardly expect a solution of every sorrow overnight: chagrin, irritation, unreturned love, jealousy, cooling of feeling, a hundred others will remain for long. I cannot imagine loving without jealousy, I should hate to be loved without jealousy. But you know that already the joys of loving are worth more than all its miseries.

‘But I have still something else to say to you. Give more

thought to the children. Because we are so much concerned, as we must be, with day to day work, because we must give consideration to what to do this morning or this afternoon, we have too much left the children to the martinets and the quacks; we have left them to those who would thrash them and those who would coddle them. And this is a crime.

'It is no coincidence that the most perfect love produces the most astonishing creature, the human child. I said before that the young might, in humility, dare to teach their elders to-day, because they too stand close to death and have grown old before their time. But there is a further reason too: the young stand closer to innocence. It is not that childhood is inspired, but to-day, when so much evil is taught us by our powerful handful of enemies, too many are confused until they die. An articulate babe would topple empires.

'For these reasons, which is to say again for love, put the lives of children before all other lives. Never forget your childhood: we do not remember easily, too much happens every hour, our childhood becomes a jumble of pictures. But you *must* remember: you are worthless if you do not remember, if you cause your child to suffer as you yourself suffered.

'You must excuse me, I am bitter in these thoughts. Perhaps you did not suffer as children, or no more than in the soft tumbles and quick quarrels which leave no mark. But many do suffer, often no doubt for foolish reasons: but no one may judge a child. As I said, if a grown person says he is misunderstood, then probably the fault is his own; but if a child cries that it is misunderstood, then a crime has been done.

'But do not imagine that there is any easy answer; there is no cut-and-dried plan. "If you treat children in this manner all will be happy"; no, this is the hardest work of all, it is a terrible work in your hands that has to be done; and yet it is not a terrible work, only a terrible trust. At times children may seem to you half foreigners and half animals, but always they are ourselves. What help can we give? Children are often cruel, of course, and not only passionately so but coldly and calculatingly cruel; yet they are above all possessed by justice. When you are passing judgment on a child, imagine that the charge is murder, give him every conceivable benefit. Yet at the same time your judgment must be in the lightest manner, and given with infallible speed.

‘Anything less than complete love is useless. A child is naturally capable of unbounded, constant love; it is impossible for him not to love. A child is full of wild, illogical, ridiculous, curious love: a five-year-old child can treasure the butcher’s boy or the postmistress above all the rest of the world. But he does not always return the most devoted affection: if there is any falseness in it, even though the falseness is unknown to the giver, if it lacks understanding, the child will turn from it.

‘But because of his hatred of injustice a child likes deserved severity, or I should say it leaves him with no lasting resentment. Rewards and punishments naturally have their place. Flatter children: a child loves flattery, within reason it will do him no harm, he may even later live up to the undeserved praise. Conceal nothing from a child; even while saying or doing the most cruel things a child is still ultimately innocent, he is incorruptible. Or rather he can be corrupted, but the corruption does not last, it will not last unless he is corrupted again and again. Never frighten a child; but do not try to save him from fear, you will not be able to. A child may be frightened by a hideous accident, but he is just as likely to be frightened by a fairy story. Try to give him protection against fear, try to make him put fear in its proper place—(it was not for nothing that I said this would be a terrible work for you).

‘Laugh with a child if possible, and not at it. Blind love will make a child callous, at least to the giver. If you are a man I can say this to you: treat children somewhat as you treat the young wife or girl who shares your bed; be loving, be strict, be attentive. teach, laugh together, demand the highest, behave as an equal and yet actually as a better, be tolerant in small matters and inflexible in large; above all so live that you are respected. But if you are not first loved you will be able to do nothing.

‘Of course the lot of children will be almost automatically improved a thousand times in our new world. But I say this to you, do not be content with this “almost automatic” improvement; do not leave the fate of children to the experts only; accelerate this improvement, let every single one give constant thought to the children, let each do all he can for them, and more: to do less is criminal.’ The young man broke off for a minute; now the noise in the street had grown more violent than ever before, so that he had always to speak in a high voice.

'But it is not only in love for young women, for children and for laughter that we feel ourselves back in the heart of humanity; I am thinking also of books, of the countryside, of eating and drinking, of gambling, of painting, of music, of flying, of plays, of games, of all the things I find good. Love all these, and more. And if you are well, think often of that. Keep as close to country life as you can, at least know more of it than the unfortunates like myself who are outside looking in. Many have to leave it altogether; do not exaggerate this harm, remember in this respect we are taking one step back, but in order to go a million forward.

'Gamble, and drink, certainly, get drunk sometimes too: only do not drink "tragically", do it joyously; and do not be weakened by it, if it weakens you, turn to something else.

'But above all honour those who give us our music, our pictures and books. Each man may do one thing: the ugly youth may thrill millions with his football, the figure of fun may be a national hero with his fiddle. Do not give the thinkers more than their due, but still honour them as they deserve. Remember that a thousand miles away, in the capital of our future, the people stand in three great groups, bound together for ever; those who work in the town, those who work on the land, and those who work in the mind. Each has something of the others, they will finally coalesce.

'I myself do give the thinkers more than their due, I cannot help it; it is the ecstasy I thank and love them for. Each man understands many parts of truth in his life, but honour these because they have been articulate, they have been able to give their truth to everyone. And the revelation of truth is always ecstatic. This is true of the revelation of scientific truth too, in another way; honour the birdwatcher then and the stargazer, honour the healers. But for me, I say, it is to honour above all the writers; and even greater will come, I am sure of it. Honour best whom you wish, but honour all.

'Lately many "thinkers" have turned aside and stand apart from their fellows: this is a sad thing, but think little of it, it is shortlived; their successors will grow up among us and will remain among us, to engrave our ecstasies for ever.

'It is growing late, my time is up, I can hardly make myself heard above this roar of terror and sorrow. If only I could have had another twenty years, another ten, another five. But it

may be ten years even till to-morrow morning. What a morning it will be. But I cannot live through that long night. Listen, my friends, my end may be shameful, perhaps ludicrous, but . . . but what? I can't go on. . . .

'I have failed. My poor "omelette" is unrecognizable. I have left a million things unsaid; in what I have said I have disfigured my own meaning by my tone of voice. It has been just "another story"—How could I have dared to imagine for a moment that I could express one single ecstasy to you; how could I hope it in all my ignorance, my sloth, my cowardice, my inarticulate disgrace?

'But I am still left with the joys that all have had; I have loved and been loved, I know the ecstasies of actual living, I know those moments when it is possible to see truth "in a flash". And I have my "thousands of images", perhaps even more fantastically coloured and jumbled than usual, certainly more undisciplined! All have those, confusing us even as they move us, the thousands of sights and images, chaotically jostling every second round our heads; even those alone can be almost enough'. The young man stood up suddenly and walked over to the window; he stayed there for a minute, looking out into the darkness and listening to the ringing waves of noise. Then he turned to us again.

'I am a sinner . . .' he said. 'What a tiny step it is to have realized the need for inflexible morals, what a tiny step as long as one remains without them. How did I dare to claim credit for that step? . . .

'My own and dearest friends, always aim at the impossible—though you are saints and I have nothing to teach you—never be satisfied: that is love, and the secret of life.' The young man stopped; then he turned away, to run for ever from the room. And the ecstatic human house went spinning on its wheel.

CATHERINE ANDRASSY

THE THEORY OF JUSTICE

FOR those who want to understand the psychological reasons and the background of the famous Russian Trials, the incomprehensible attitude of self-abasement, the fantastic admissions to vile and treacherous acts which the accused had never committed, and who are eager to acquire a deeper knowledge of present-day Russia, it is indispensable to read Koestler's brilliant novel *Darkness at Noon* (Cape). But those must also read it who want to sense the chief moral issues of the present war, what we are fighting against, and what values are at stake.

Rubasoff, a high official of the Soviet Republic, has been arrested by the G.P.U. He had been already arrested in the past for having strayed from the party line. This time he knows it is final. With the ardent faith of the reformer and militant philosopher, he has helped to build up the new Russia, and making a 'totalitarian' sacrifice of his own personality, had followed for many years the creed that the party is sacrosanct, and no criticism, even inside it, is admissible. For the sake of 'saving the Revolution, the Bastion of Socialism', he adopts the principle 'the end justifies the means'—all means without exception—that truth and freedom are meaningless if they do not serve the benefit of the community, which at the present stage is the Proletarian State. What the interest of the Proletarian State is, is established by its autocratic Leader, the infallible Master, the great No. 1. Results alone are important, intentions irrelevant. For many years he had, if not adopted, silently accepted that new catechism of false information and twisted statistics, of total disregard and contempt for the masses (one only lies to those one despises), of slavish worship and unrivalled sycophancy. Their excuse, his excuse, had always been the results anticipated. But the question arises in him: Can results ever be satisfactory when the masses, through the prolonged use of violence, have become deaf and dumb again; and can only give satisfaction to the lust of power and the vanity of a megalomaniac? Rubasoff, the student, the intellectual *par excellence*, could not continue to follow the uncritical sheeplike

herd who prefer to load on an infallible Pope the responsibility of their weakness and cowardice. Intellectually honest, he has to raise the question, 'Isn't the equation wrong? (In life one can't follow the abstract uninquisitiveness of the mathematician, who goes on operating his equation without knowing for what the x stands.) The statesman who works for the welfare of the masses ought first to know the nature of those masses. The x stands for that unknown quantity, therefore the calculation went wrong.' The basic instincts of human nature can't be violated for long successfully. The people who had awakened for a short time have again been put to sleep with the help of narcotic catchwords. The masses have again been betrayed. The changed social conditions have not raised their standard, for the means employed to realize these social conditions were so drastic that they stifled any form of development. Instead of trying to raise in them respect for the human being, they made use of their superstitious and credulous natures to increase the State's authority, giving them new superstitions, new creeds, as incomprehensible and mystical as those of the orthodox Church. The drive of the backward masses under the rattle of machine-guns, towards forced mechanised civilization *à l'américain*, creates disharmony which cannot engender anything worth while, but will ultimately lead to reaction. As no human being can free himself entirely from his mental and spiritual inheritance which is his by tradition, environment, family, upbringing, the force of Rubasoff's ethics, which had made him fight Tsarism in the past, his sense of justice and civic courage rise in him once more when he realizes that the means used for securing the end, were just those means which had had the effect of pushing back the masses into the same mental darkness and barbarism from which he had tried to deliver them. Slowly the realization dawns on him that the path the Revolution had adopted could never lead towards a higher moral consciousness, without which no human progress can be achieved. But to fight tyranny, oppression, injustice and misery was even harder now than in the days of the Tsar.

Vague preliminary plans—rather talks—between malcontent elements and a foreign diplomat, half thoughts, half expressed, get back in a mysterious way to the authorities. It seems to have been a valuable service the foreign diplomat rendered to his potential ally, from whose internal regime he has no more fear. Rubasoff

is arrested. No. 1's Intelligence Service proves more efficient than that of the Romanoffs.

The three hearings are masterful descriptions of the fundamental moral divergencies of our epoch. The party spokesman Ivanoff puts the problem in the following way: 'There are only two conceptions of human ethics and they are at opposite poles. One of them is Christian and humane and declares the individual to be sacrosanct, and asserts that the rules of arithmetic are not to be applied to human units. The other starts from the basic principle that a collective aim justifies all means, and not only allows but demands that individuals should in every way be subordinate and sacrificed to the community, which may dispose of them as an experimental rabbit or a sacrificial lamb. The first conception would be called antivivisection morality, the second vivisection morality.'

Isn't this the parallel to the Nazi propagandists, who say that there is no crime if it can help the fatherland?

Ivanoff, who endeavours to be the model of the modern man, describes him as follows: 'He reads Machiavelli (we could add Spengler for the Nazis), Ignatius de Loyola, Marx and Hegel; he is cold and unmerciful to mankind, but of a kind of mathematical mercifulness. He is damned always to do that which is most repugnant to him; to become a slaughterer in order to abolish slaughtering; to sacrifice lambs so that no more lambs may be slaughtered; to whip people with knouts so that they may learn not to let themselves be whipped; to strip himself of every scruple in the name of higher scrupulousness and challenge the hatred of mankind because of his love for it; an abstract and geometric love.'

A pure Dostoievsky hero, Rubasoff's discussion at his inquest on 'Crime and Punishment', is a classical example of a Russian intellectual's incapacity to rid himself of the moral side of social problems, although theoretically they had long ago discharged all ethical aspects as purely 'bourgeois'. Rubasoff, as well as Raskolnikoff, discovers 'that twice two are not always four when mathematical units are human beings', and that economic reform alone is not enough. Ivanoff jeers at this old-fashioned ideology, and solves it in saying 'Had Raskolnikoff bumped off the old woman at the order of the party, the equation would stand, and the novel with its misleading problem would never have been written, and so much the better for humanity.' Doubts, vacillations, moral problems are contra-revolutionary because they

weaken. Truth is what is useful, falsehood what is harmful. 'One may not regard the world as a sort of metaphysical brothel for emotions. Sympathy, conscience, disgust, despair, repentance and atonement are for us repellent debauchery. The greatest temptation is to renounce violence, to repent, to make peace with oneself. Most great revolutionaries fell before this temptation from Spartacus to Danton and Dostoievsky. They are the classical form of betrayal of the cause. The temptations of God were always more dangerous to mankind than those of Satan. As long as chaos dominates the world, God is an anachronism, and every compromise with one's conscience is perfidy.'

When Ivanoff, having wanted to save Rubasoff, is also liquidated, the mechanized man, Glatkin, who neither loves nor hates, who has grown up in a period of revaluations where motives and intentions are irrelevant and are cast aside with a shrug as romantic and sentimental, takes his place. For Rubasoff the main issue lies in the ultimate freedom of man and in the respect for his personality. Glatkin, who despises mankind, takes and gives orders believing in the infallibility of those who give them. The spiritual disciple of Ignatus de Loyola, he could have been as easily that of Hitler, is accidentally that of Stalin. He got the order to destroy Rubasoff, so the question of innocence or guilt does not exist. With remarkable astuteness he appeals to all those ideas and convictions which for so long had kept Rubasoff in the line of the party, and when the accused reverses to his ethical and intellectual revolutionism, which he lost as well as himself when he followed the lead of the 'Neanderthal' men, and threw it out of the boat as worthless ballast, Glatkin reminds him of arguments used in his own speeches and writings to back up the regime. No escape is possible. He realizes that while emptying out the soiled water of Tsaristic institutions he helped to throw out the new born of the social order. 'The policy of the international had to be subordinated to national Russian policy and those who did not understand this had to be destroyed. Whole sets of the best functionaries in Europe had to be physically liquidated. They crushed their own organizations abroad and co-operated with the police of reactionary countries in order to suppress the revolutionary meetings which came at the wrong moment. They betrayed their friends and compromised with their enemies. Their press and their schools cultivate Chauvinism,

militarism, dogmatism, conformism and ignorance. The arbitrary power of the government is unlimited and unexampled in history. 'The energies of this generation are exhausted, they were spent in the revolution. For this generation is bled white and there is nothing left of it but a moaning, numbed, apathetic lump of sacrificial flesh.' 'I see the flayed body of the generation, but I see no trace of the new skin.' That's how Rubasoff sees it now, but for ten years he had talked the same language as Glatkin, the son of that revolution which Rubasoff had brought to victory and which is now holding him in a steel grip. The starved man whose coming into existence was Rubasoff's greatest crime. 'He who is the flesh of their flesh, grown independent and become insensible.' The Zauberlehrling is master over his creator, for ghosts and convictions can't be cast off if once they have been called to rise.

In the struggle for power the Glatkins will always win, 'for they have no childhood to erase'. Logic is a terrible thing, it can lead to murder if taken too seriously. 'For perhaps it was not suitable for man to think every thought to its logical conclusion. Perhaps it did not suit man to be completely freed from old bonds, from the steadying brakes of "Thou shalt not" and "Thou mayst not", and to be allowed to tear along straight towards the goal. Perhaps it did not suit mankind to sail without ballast. Perhaps the revolution has come too early, an abortion with monstrous deformed limbs.'

We follow with anguish the duel in which Rubasoff is entangled like a fly in the web of the spider—a web which he had spun himself—the web of his own logic, disillusionment, remorse, fatigue, the torture of sleepless nights, and the glaring light of the electric bulb burning his eyes used to the darkness of his cell. He himself is no more the man he was. He had gone too far, he had made too many concessions, his faith had been too deeply shattered. There is no public to whom he can appeal; there are only the large backward masses to whom he himself has lied and deceived, and who are not strong enough to hear the truth.

Failure is a crime, he had said it often, so the failure of the opposition to bring off a revolution was his. 'The amount of individual freedom which a people may conquer and keep depends on the degree of its political maturity. In periods of maturity it is the duty and the function of the opposition to appeal

to the masses. In periods of mental immaturity only demagogues invoke the higher judgment of the people. In such situations the opposition has two alternatives: to seize the power by a *coup d'état*, or if unsuccessful—die silently.' He should have known that the first was impossible. Crime seeks for punishment; that is Dostoievsky, Russian, Christian. He has to pay. He wants to pay. Where convictions can't be materialized they have to be suppressed and denied. 'Questions of personal pride, prejudice, such as existing elsewhere against certain forms of self-abasement, should be cut off root and branch,' he writes in his diary.

Darkness at Noon has the elements of pure Greek tragedy. It lies in the failure of the well-intentioned hero, who can't escape his fate since the tragedy lies in himself. Plisnier's Igor in the *Faux Passport* deals with the same problem of the purges. The sublime self-sacrifice of Igor, who is ready to face more than death, self-abasement, the besmirching of his revolutionary past, the admission of the most vile motives of his actions, with the knowledge of being executed in the cellars of the G.P.U. without anyone ever knowing that he was innocent, is that his name will go down into the history of his country as a traitor and a criminal. But the party is saved, for if the truth would be known, the party would suffer. The superhuman and heroic self-sacrifice, so difficult to understand for the western man, for whom personal honour means the most, is in parts not entirely convincing. With Koestler we follow the hero's mental process, he makes us share his moral disgust so totally, his conclusions, his guilt, that it becomes completely irrelevant that Rubasoff admits to crimes which he has not committed. We feel with him that he is guilty, not of the crimes to which he admits, but of others, as 'there is another measure besides that of reason, and did the righteous man perhaps carry the heaviest debt when weighed by this other measure? Was his debt perhaps counted double, for the others knew not what they did?' And when he admits to having wanted to assassinate No. 1, he does it not because he was guilty of it, but because he can't see 'why political murder was more dishonourable than political mass killing,' and civil war would have meant the latter. We are worked up to such a state of philosophical detachment when actual facts are of no importance. Points which a second ago seemed essential suddenly fade into nothingness. Rubasoff, the essentially ethical man, wants to expiate, 'for one

only can be crucified in the name of one's belief.' When he has reached this state, Glatkin tells him frankly that the party demands from him to make himself the scapegoat, for reason shows that it is more effective to tell the people that the industrial failures are due to counter revolutionary sabotage rather than to the unsatisfactory state of the industries. 'Scapegoats have always been a valuable necessity—Jesus Christ, the Lamb, had taken on Himself all sin. For 2,000 years people have found this quite natural. Experience teaches us to use this method,' explains Glatkin. The masses have to get their Punch and Judy show with angels and devils, with over-statements and simplification. The false admittance to treachery and the vilest motives will be Rubasoff's last service to the party, for which Glatkin thanks him in calling him comrade, and in spite of everything Rubasoff can't help feeling honoured and thankful for this kind word. The game is finished. It was a strange and grim one, unusual to ordinary beings—this staged performance of actors who once entangled in the web of their lies, are forced to go on with it to the very last consequence, even on the very threshold of death—they stay constant to The Lie. The Lie has become the omnipotent master.

These Russian rebels end their lives very differently to those of the French Revolution. To those at least was given the narcotic of public execution, where in front of the scaffold, terror of death could be drowned in the admiration or even in the hate of the spectators. It was a supreme show in which the grammatical fiction 'I' reaches its apotheosis. Few are those who don't pass the test, but it is hard to die alone, shot like a dog in a cellar. The men before the guillotine died with a phrase on their lips, to arouse approval or state their conviction for historical rehabilitation—a final satisfaction to their vanity. The super vanity of Danton made him say to his executioner: 'Montre ma tête au peuple; elle en vaut la peine.' Rubasoff remembers by heart Danton's words before the Tribunal Revolutionnaire, but rejects the temptation to use them. It would harm the party, the state, if he, the devil of the Punch and Judy show should be regarded as a hero. He has to die guilty. And for what? 'For the preservation of the bastion, the bastion which has no longer any message to give, nor an example for the world.' It is like a building which the blast has blown out; only the shell remains, an edifice without a

soul, which one day will have to be torn down and another built instead on real human values.

For most of us all this seems very remote and incomprehensible. We would like to throw it off as 'purely Russian,' the twisted pathological problems of diseased brains. But Koestler's book is much more than Russian or Communist. It is the eternal conflict of thesis and antithesis. Aristotle versus Plato, which, simplified, comes down to the following: What has to come first; the change of the individual who will then adopt the better institutions to his better and higher ideals, or the change of the institutions so that the individual who could not change otherwise should develop? For how can we change man, if the conditions under which he lives, have made him what he is? Can one build up a new world with old people? Can one hope to breed new people in a rotten world? It seems to be a vicious circle, for the means employed are such that no man using them can escape from deterioration in human value. Can one build anything worth while on such a humanity? And what goal can one achieve? What end? Is there any end? Isn't any end a new beginning? A beginning which we can't see, an end which is no end and which will always carry the stamp of the means we have used, and which therefore is our greatest responsibility. From all times people have used bad means to obtain good ends, or rather ends they thought good. We even do it to-day, when we accept mass murder and violence to resist a much greater evil—the permanent violence of fascism. The principle of preventive wars. Wars to make the world safe for democracy. Dreyfus was declared a traitor by the entire French clerical world, in spite of the fact that all knew that he was innocent. The aim was the crushing and compromising of the Left in France, of the Freemasonry and of the Jews. Justice and Truth seemed to be for those Catholic reactionaries irrelevant; if it harmed their cause it had to be suppressed. They jeered at those who were scrupulous, as harmful idealists. Ivanoff versus Rubasoff. The ruling classes have on various occasions suppressed truth and turned to violence to obtain their ends. It is not for them to be shocked; not for those who sacrificed the lives of millions for military conquests, or in coal and minefields, and let children die of tuberculosis and under nourishment. Why should they think this less unjust than the injustice and violence of revolutions? Is suffering only objected to when it is endured

under the pretext of a happier future? But what guarantee have we that the future—this future which has emerged out of the lowest standard of human awareness, out of misled and misused mankind, should be anything better? Religions, the recognition of absolute ethical values have been used as adequate brakes on violence, on brute force, on the lies and the calumnies which all authority is tempted to use. Christianity, although incompatible with capitalism, did create a compromise, an ethical ballast, which although hypocritical at times, recognized and paid tribute to kindness, love, truth and justice. 'Hypocrisy is the tribute vice renders to virtue.' Love endeavours to counterbalance hate, and the priest preaches love from the pulpits, gives consolation to the condemned at the foot of the scaffold, and to the soldier on the battlefield. Communists and Fascists, perhaps more logical, apply hate and violence in a totalitarian way. The balance is overthrown, the brakes give, and mankind runs amuck towards destruction. For we cannot turn vice into virtue without having the vital centres from which human evolution grows damaged. Moral balance is essential to preserve us from disintegration. As long as we preserve in them the faith of absolute good, faith in love, truth and justice, there is still hope for progress. Oversimplification does not necessarily mean clear-sightedness, and the allegation that there is no difference between the methods of democracies and those of totalitarian states, can mislead only the simple-minded who disregard the importance of measure and degree and are ignorant of the art of differentiation. To follow a thought to its last conclusion can be a pleasure, but it is not life. Life is complex and paradoxical; its pattern is composed by varying hues, lights and shades, and no rigid dogma can deviate its rhythm of ebb and flow from the harmony of its inner law.

SELECTED NOTICES

The Poetry of W. B. Yeats. By Louis MacNeice. Oxford, 8s. 6d.

'In dreams begins responsibility.' Such in four words is the history of Yeats as a poet. From the irresponsible private dream, to the dream in which the poet assumes the responsibility of his world, Yeats completed the poetic metamorphosis as a few only complete

it. As a young man, he came to London to join in the Nineties 'under the banner of the Solitary Spirit,' 'more Pre-Raphaelite than the Pre-Raphaelites,' and adhering to Pater's version of the Æsthetic gospel that 'Art never expresses anything but itself' ('As for living, our servants will do that for us' was de l'Isle Adam's corollary to this aphorism of Oscar Wilde).

The nineties were the hey-day of dreams, their irresponsibility still unchallenged by the Psycho-Analysts. Such dreams were the territory of a school of poets—priests without a congregation Mr. MacNeice calls them—who chose to say 'I banish you' to an indifferent world, but who wished to remain a perfect aristocracy. Mr. MacNeice, who has an excellent ear for such things, points out that 'there was something heiratic about the Alexandrine of the Nineties.' This distinguished and heiratic quality at least Yeats retained long after he had said farewell to the 'plumed but skinny shee.'

Later his dreams became responsible, the conventional poetic field came to include what the realists choose to call their world. But it was rather by a development of the dream than a rejection of dreams that this took place. 'We should ascend out of common interests, the thought of the newspapers, of the market-place, of men of science, but only so far as we can carry . . . the personality as a whole.' Thus it came that Yeats in his later years was occupied in preparing ballads and broadsheets that he hoped to have sung all over Ireland, and could wonder 'Did that play of mine send out certain men the English shot?' Thus came he to write:

'For nothing can be sole or whole
That has not been born'

—the Æsthetes answered once for all.

Yeats, as a playwright not very successful, shared with the writers of poetic drama a basic conception of Life as a Dream. Having come to admire men of action, he rationalized his admiration by a theory that the man of action is a dreamer—who dramatizes his dream in action.' In this he may be compared with Calderon for whom 'even dreams are only dreams,' and with Shakespeare for whom 'we are such stuff as dreams.' There is something platonic about Yeats's Byzantium—'a world where blue is always blue, unlike the physical world where a blue object

changes with every change in the light.' Writing of his first impressions of *The Tower* Mr. MacNeice says 'I found it frigid, unsympathetic . . . too mannered. Like a figure from a fancy-dress party he looked wrong by day-light.' Later realizing that 'the daylight of "realism", is itself largely a fiction,' Mr. MacNeice felt differently towards this real or fictitious eternity which Yeats made his world.

Later, without rejecting the dream, Yeats came to write of the dreamer—the fool, the old man, the beggar, *Crazy Jane*: characters like those of his friend John Synge, important not of themselves, but because of the dreamer of poetry, it can be said that

'Like a long-legged fly upon the stream,
His mind moves upon silence.'

Many schools in the long course of his poetry have claimed Yeats. (Symons claimed him for the Impressionists.) Morris wrote: 'You write any kind of poetry'. Auden and the 'realists' have said the same, and Mr. MacNeice is anxious to give his friends all he honestly can—'Like Yeats, they opposed to the contemporary chaos, a code of values, a belief in system, . . . a belief in life.' (A very different code of values, and a very different system, but the wish to stand with Yeats is stronger than the differences!) Yeats himself tried to found an Irish school round himself, and in this country would gladly have lent himself to a movement represented by Lady Gerald Wellesley and Mr. W. J. Turner, had such existed. But Mr. MacNeice, after careful examination of all claims, places the distinguished and lonely Yeats with two other distinguished and lonely poets, who never claimed him, nor he them—Eliot and Lawrence. 'We might say of Yeats that he approximates to Lawrence in so far as he is eclectic, and to Eliot in so far as he is authoritarian.' One might say that eclecticism is common to all three, and that Eliot's authoritarianism is itself eclectic. But it is in style that the resemblance merges, and it is precisely in the comparison of style that Mr. MacNeice excels as a critic.

Mr. MacNeice disclaims any interest in 'ranking poets' or in 'great poetry as such', but few will differ from his conclusion that 'Yeats's limitations may have prevented him writing the greatest kind of poetry, but they enabled him to write perhaps the best poetry of his time.'

'It must be admitted that there was a certain snobbery in our new admiration, a snobbery paralleled in Yeats's own remark "I too have tried to be modern".' Mr. MacNeice here speaks for his own generation, and might be understood to imply that in his later works Yeats managed to catch up with his juniors after a badly handicapped start. But there is no question of Yeats ending where Auden begins, or Auden beginning where Yeats ends. Later Yeats is 'The final results of mastery' of which Roger Fry said truly enough that it 'cannot be achieved without going through the preliminary stages.' Yeats wrote laboriously, seeking to convince his compatriots that to write without reflection is not 'a Celtic privilege.' Far less would he have agreed with Auden's view that all material that can be popped with a linguistic Leica is poetic. He expanded from the poetic centre, whereas Auden storms the circumference.

Mr. MacNeice, himself a poet, has a start of most critics in knowing what a poem is. This sixth sense gives him an authority greater than argument. No poet, I believe, would in essence disagree with what he writes about the nature of poems. 'A poem is a thing in itself,' 'a self-contained organism, a physical organism, a separate self'. This places him at the outset near to Yeats, and his subsequent examination of the verbal texture of Yeats's poems is vital, and unerring. By a series of excellent comparisons, he reveals his early debts to Morris, Keats, Tennyson; his debts to Ireland; his later affinities with Eliot and Lawrence; and the growth of his own personal style. Mr. MacNeice shows how and with what in mind he altered passages in his early poems in later years, and it is unlikely that any analysis could more nearly pursue the actual process through which Yeats passed. Mr. MacNeice's approach is that of a poet, but an expert and scholarly poet—and this is certainly the most fruitful approach to Yeats for whom 'words alone are certain good.'

I hope I have sufficiently indicated the excellence of this book to venture on some criticisms. Mr. MacNeice is too much on the defensive. On page 1 he writes: 'Poetry nowadays appears to need defending.' This is a curious opening for a book on the one poet who has been acclaimed—even too much acclaimed for his Apostolic successors—and one feels that it is less Yeats than himself that Mr. MacNeice wishes to defend. He goes on to introduce the extraneous question of Rupert Brooke's attitude to war, and

his own feeling that this war made Yeats and his poetry seem unreal. 'The unreality which now overtook them was also overtaking in my mind modern London, modernist art, and Left Wing politics . . . I gradually inferred, as I recovered from the shock of war, that both these kinds of poetry stand or fall together.' So they do, if war is viewed as death, but a revision of evaluation may well be made necessary by war viewed as a change in the conditions of living. It may be that some of the pre-war values *were* unreal and *will* have to be discarded, but as Mr. MacNeice concludes of Rupert Brooke, that he made premature decisions on war and poetry in 1914, so we hope that Mr. MacNeice will not repeat his error, in 1941.

A more serious weakness is Mr. MacNeice's failure to attack directly the problem of the relation of Yeats's systems and beliefs to his poetry. He skirmishes with the Marxists, coquettes with the mystics, but finally tries to get out of it: 'His doctrine of poetry may have been unsound, but it does not compare too badly with the doctrines of his contemporaries.' The Symbolists, Imagists, A. E. Housman, Surrealists, Eliot, Riding, Auden, the Communists. Elsewhere he slips over the difference in system between Yeats and the 'realists,' saying that the common element is hewing a system. The system inherent in poetry can no more be transplanted out of poetry than can Buddhism, Christianity or Marxism be transplanted into it. But can it from this be argued that systems to poets are mere scaffolding? That Yeats treated his 'blue print for reality' as such might be deduced from the authority he, as poet, assumed over his 'spirits.' When they, during séances, dictated bad poetry, he switched them off. The poet was the test, and Yeats himself the authority. Is there really (as one poet to another might ask it) any essential difference in process between Yeats's invocations of spirits and incarnations, and Mr. Eliot's sterner, plainer, but not less liberating concept of 'Impersonality'? Yeats preferred ever the picturesque word. Yet both seek to rationalize an experience familiar to all poets, drawing on a source, so far without, or so deep within, as to be beyond the accepted limits of the self. Freud's 'Unconscious' might serve another poet to describe the same thing. I do not feel that Mr. MacNeice has dealt quite adequately with this question of Yeats's beliefs in relation to his poetry. Did he believe or did he not, does it matter or does it not, do the beliefs of poet

matter or do they not? To say that we all have beliefs of some sort anyway, is to sit on the fence, both of poetry and of ethics. Mr. MacNeice understands the nature of poetry so well, that one wishes that he had gone one better and faced this important issue. Perhaps, however, it only exists for poets at the moment when their poetry solves it—precisely at that point at which neither poetry nor system is in need of defending. One cause at least Mr. MacNeice defends well—that of scholarly criticism in the field of living poetry.

K. J. RAINE

Frederick the Great, by Pierre Gaxotte, translated by R. A. Bell (G. Bell & Sons, 15s.).

How remote they sometimes seem, those Enlightened Despots of the eighteenth century: disciples of the Physiocrats, patrons of the Encyclopædists, the German epigoni of Louis XIV, basking in an artificial afterglow of the splendours of Versailles! And yet their modernity is sometimes grimly apparent. They rejected the restraints of tradition and the sanctity of treaties; they despised their subjects and made their yoke effective; and they partitioned Poland. In the end, the very success of their Realpolitik was their undoing. The disorderly Machiavellianism of the 1780's was too hectic to last; and in the avalanche which followed, Europe, losing its kings, was forced to rediscover some common standards of international behaviour.

Of this dichotomy Frederick the Great is a fascinating example, in which the characteristics of the age were heightened by a personal case-history. In consequence, he is a hazardous subject for a biographer. That Mr. Gaxotte should avoid the cruder misrepresentations of the panegyrists and the scandalographers is, of course, to be expected; but there are other hazards, less blatant than these. How easy, and how tempting, but how fatal, for a writer in 1941 (like Mr. Gaxotte) to dwell upon the contemporary relevancies, which are so obvious; how natural, and how pardonable, but also how fatal, for an erudite scholar (like Mr. Gaxotte) to lose his reader's way in the barren intricacies of eighteenth century diplomacy. Mr. Gaxotte has, however, avoided both pitfalls. He has left modern inferences to the reader, and dead politics out of the book; and he has described, with skill, the history of a warped personality and a successful reign.

The character of Frederick is interesting, but not attractive. The fastidious, dilettante Prince, brutally treated by an unsympathetic father, survived his humiliations only by developing a callous duplicity and assuming a serious mission; and when his father's death set him free, he ascended the throne of Prussia as a cynical egotist, a frustrated intellectual, and a ruthless and efficient despot.

These interwoven, and often conflicting characteristics are illustrated throughout Mr. Gaxotte's book. The author is more concerned with the personality than the historical significance of his subject; and most readers will be glad to find the strategy of Frederick's wars treated in less detail than the life at Rheinsberg and Sans Souci. We are shown impartially the philosopher discussing with Voltaire the engaging topic of Plato's androgynes; the soldier sneering at his own collection of literati; and the restless administrator whose demands of his subordinates caused an English envoy to observe, 'I would rather be a monkey in Borneo than a minister in Prussia'. But perhaps the most fascinating aspect of that complex character is what psychologists term the ambivalence of Frederick's attitude towards the intellectuals, whom he first courted with fashionable adulation, and then treated as Court-fools. His relations with Voltaire are famous; but the others fared no better; and the vanity of philosophers and the vanity of German princes being about equal, the results were nearly always disastrous. Frederick's mind seems really never to have developed beyond the adolescent stage at which it suffered its great crisis—his intellectual judgments remained always immature; but although he devoted his riper faculties to a historic task, which he superimposed upon his early inclinations, the suppressed intellectual hankerings would still return to torment him with the memory of those miserable years. Frederick indulged these mutilated instincts; but for their mutilation he took his revenge on the less unfortunate philosophers of Sans Souci.

Of course there were other reasons too for the alliance between Frederick and the philosophers. While Louis XIV reigned at the luminous centre of civilization, those who, in the next generation, claimed to carry on the traditions of Versailles, were conscious of their cultural isolation. They were exiles in barbarian lands beyond the Rhine; and the friendship of Voltaire, of D'Alembert, and of Diderot was necessary to Frederick and Catherine if they were to

respect themselves, and despise and reform their subjects. Besides, the Encyclopædists were first-rate propagandists. There is a modern ring in Voltaire's eulogy of Frederick's new order after the Peace of Breslau. Even the Partition of Poland was represented as a victory of liberty of conscience over 'christed superstition'—for, as Mr. Gaxotte asks, 'who could take up the cause of such pious Catholics as the Poles in the century of the Encyclopædia?' It does us no harm to be reminded that the Enlightenment was not on the side of Self-Determination.

H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

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HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

Vol. IV No. 20 August 1941

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COMMENT

PERIODS end when we are not looking, as a late party breaks up when the host for a moment goes out of the room. The last two years have been such a turning point; an epidemic of dying has ended many movements, and were *Horizon* conscientiously to do justice to them all it would appear in black covers and become a mere chronicle of obituaries, as full of mourning notices as a Spanish newspaper. The essays on Virginia Woolf but scratched the subject; Freud must make do on one poem; the genial Hugh Walpole, who gave his article on Henry James to us for nothing, has had no epitaph, and many now who would have died in headlines depart in small paragraphs in a lunch-time edition. In the last year or so we have lost great Victorians who have moulded our ways of thinking, friendly Georgians, acid contemporaries and promising young men, so that we can only commemorate, among the spate of 'deaths and entrances', those by whose art we have been helped and deepened.

Great books have great beginnings: reading their opening words is like settling down for a long journey; the baton falls, the first phrases announce the quality and the theme.

'No one who has seen that calm water, lapped in a green hollow of the Alban hills, can ever forget it. . . . In antiquity this sylvan landscape was the scene of a strange and recurring tragedy. On the northern shore of the lake, right under the precipitous cliffs on which the modern village of Nemi is perched, stood the sacred grove and sanctuary of Diana Nemorensis, or Diana of the Wood. . . . In this sacred grove there grew a certain tree round which at any time of the day, and probably far into the night, a grim figure might be seen to prowl. In his hand he carried a drawn sword, and he kept peering warily about him as if at every instant he expected to be set upon by an enemy. He was a priest and a murderer; and the man for whom he looked was sooner or later to murder him and hold the priesthood in his stead. Such was the rule of the sanctuary. . . .

'The post which he held by this precarious tenure carried with it the title of king; but surely no crowned head ever lay uneasier, or was visited by more evil dreams than his. . . . The dreamy blue of Italian skies, the dappled shade of summer woods, and the

sparkle of waves in the sun, can have accorded but ill with that stern and sinister figure. Rather we picture to ourselves the scene as it may have been witnessed by a belated wayfarer on one of those wild autumn nights when the dead leaves are falling thick, and the winds seem to sing the dirge of the dying year. It is a sombre picture, set to melancholy music—the background of forest shining black and jagged against a lowering and stormy sky, the sighing of the wind in the branches, the rustle of the withered leaves under foot, the lapping of cold water on the shore, and in the foreground, pacing to and fro, now in twilight and now in gloom, a dark figure with a glitter of steel at the shoulder whenever the pale moon, riding clear of the cloud-rack, peers down at him through the matted boughs.

These opening paragraphs give a true picture of Sir James Frazer's romantic poetical temper of mind. The poetry is all pervading though the diction is flat and commonplace. We are looking at a brown landscape by Salvator Rosa in a Victorian dining room. But Sir James Frazer, fortunately, is not to be judged by his poetry. 'The strange rule of this priesthood', he continues, 'has no parallel in classical antiquity, and cannot be explained from it. To find an explanation we must go farther afield'—and there follow the twelve volumes of *The Golden Bough*.

The Golden Bough is an encyclopædia rather than a work of art, one wanders there as through an ethnographical museum, fascinated by the Adonis-Attis rooms, the cases from the Near-East; horrified by the African, bored by many of the Oriental and South American exhibits. Some tableaux stand out vividly, like the recurring drama of the Shilluk kings, who, when their wives begin to report on their failing powers, wake up from their afternoon sleep to find a white cloth over their face, and know from this sign that their end has come, and that, though divine, they will be sealed up in a hut with their head on the lap of a nubile virgin and left to suffocate or starve to death. Meanwhile our guide moves us on, through corn-mothers and corn-maidens, tree-spirits, and Beltane fires, and back to the lake of Nemi, where the King of the Wood himself, now reduced to the symbol of a tree-spirit, stands guard over that part of himself which is to kill him, the mistletoe bough. For our guide, the loquacious curator of this vast museum holds very definite views. He is the

enemy of the Diffusionists, he is the enemy of the plagiarising Christian Church, whom he attacks in places with Gibbonian intensity. He is the defender of the West against the death-wishful emasculating religions of the East, and, after steeping himself in Oriental beliefs (whose poetry and mystical appeal administered in a much smaller dose have been fatal to several contemporary writers), he proclaims his faith, not in Yoga, stars, spiritualism, non-attachment or non-resistance, but in the ancient Roman (and Victorian Scotch) conception of patriotism and duty.

'Greek and Roman society was built on the conception of the subordination of the individual to the community, of the citizen to the state; it set the safety of the commonwealth, as the supreme aim of conduct, above the safety of the individual whether in this world or in a world to come. Trained from infancy in this unselfish ideal, the citizens devoted their lives to the public service and were ready to lay them down for the common good; or if they shrank from the sacrifice, it never occurred to them that they acted otherwise than basely in preferring their personal existence to the interests of their country. All this was changed by the spread of Oriental religions which inculcated the communion of the soul with God, and its eternal salvation as the only objects worth living for, objects in comparison with which the prosperity and even the existence of the state sank into insignificance. The inevitable result of this selfish and universal doctrine was to withdraw the devotee more and more from the public service, to concentrate his thoughts on his own spiritual emotions, and to breed in him a contempt for the present life which he regarded merely as a probation for a better and an eternal . . . The ties of the state and the family were loosened: the structure of society tended to resolve itself into its individual elements and thereby to relapse into barbarism; for civilisation is only possible through the active co-operation of the citizens and their willingness to subordinate their private interests to the common good. Men refused to defend their country and even to continue their kind. In their anxiety to save their own souls and the souls of others, they were content to leave the material world, which they identified with the principle of evil, to perish round them. This obsession lasted for a thousand years. The revival of Roman law, of the Aristotelean philosophy, of ancient art and literature at the close of the Middle Ages, marked the return of Europe to native

A Message from Moscow

CYRIL CONNOLLY, STEPHEN SPENDER, HORIZON

Thank you for friendly greetings to Soviet writers. We are happy to establish with English and American intellectuals deep mutual understanding and mutual aim laying principles of justice, goodwill—indispensable grounds for future growth humanitarian culture in world.

We Soviet writers, as our Red Army and all united fraternal consolidated peoples Soviet Union, are full of optimism. Fight is stubborn, difficult, and enemy like wounded monster exerting all its strength, but power and resistance of our Army grows each day, while strength Hitler's Army each day wanes. Especially difficult for Germans last week's battle. On important directions front we destroyed five divisions—separate columns of three hundred tanks completely destroyed to last machine—also several separate large infantry and tank formations. Offensive violence enemy diminishing. Among German war prisoners more and more often we come across youths or elderly soldiers badly dressed and exhausted who are unfamiliar with automatic guns. Our guerrilla fighters paralyse transport of German munitions and petrol, more and more frequently Germans bury their tanks in the earth, using them as forts. German infantry trained only to carry out lightning war, compelled change methods to war manœuvres, which it poorly understands, and is quickly falling into a state of panic. Frequently our troops discover Germans chained to machine-gun or tankists whom German officers have locked in buried tanks.

Such facts bring serious reflections. For example, advancing German infantry drives before it on our line of fire captured women children refugees. German army hides behind women's skirts and children's bodies—only an army struck with deadly inner disintegration could stoop to such ignominy.

In name of Soviet literature please give friendly and fraternal greetings to writers of England and America—to all who dedicate their lives to the annihilation of bloody and vicious fascism on our beautiful earth. On us all depends that this black night more quickly passes.

ALEXEI TOLSTOY

deals of life and conduct, to saner, manlier views of the world. The long halt in the march of civilisation was over. The tide of Oriental invasion had turned at last. It is ebbing still.'

Had Sir James realized what was to take its place, and how the cult of the State was to develop, he would not have enjoyed his triumph, and there is evidence that at the end of his life—that long, happy, simple, one-track life devoted to the scientific pursuit of truth through one of those historic collaborations of which the human couple is still capable, he regretted that he had not occupied himself more with the problems of the world, and used his influence in combating the newest and crudest religion at work in it. But this is of small importance to his readers, for, like Freud, he is one of those who change the fundamental attitude of those who read him; they are never quite the same, they can never be superficially scornful of folk-lore or religions, indifferent to the seasons, or contemptuous of the savage—sometimes his disciples produce flowers of understanding like Logan Pearsall-Smith's *Vicar of Lynch*; sometimes they do no more than look differently at men reaping, since they knew that it would have not been unusual, a short time ago, for the reapers to seize the onlooker and cut his throat over the corn. Both Freud and Frazer go deeper than Marx, for the springs which move the individual are more profound than the economic laws which govern society. The disciple of Sir James Frazer will always tend to find the Mystery of the Wheat-sheaf more absorbing than the price of bread, even though not till bread is free will he be justified.

Reading *The Golden Bough* brings home the utter emptiness, in regard to magic and myth, of the life of urban economic man. Religious art is at a standstill, it would be better to convert our bombed churches into moss-grown ruins and leave them to stand like Greek temples than to look for the architects to rebuild and restore them, while the images sold by ecclesiastic furnishers are beyond belief. The life of the city dwellers has long lost all contact with the seasons, and the city has invaded the country and destroyed what it has found. Even in Sir James Frazer's time he could write of Devonshire rustics 'crying the neck' and so penetrating, in their cries of 'Wee Yen Way Yen', which could be heard four miles away and 'resembled a Turkish Muezzin', the minus lament, the Oriental wailing for the death of the corn

spirit, whose wheaten neck is that of Adonis himself. No such rites have yet arisen round the Filling Station, though we may still live to see our window-boxes transformed by natural piety into Gardens of Adonis, where quick-flowering plants spring up in three days, after which they fade, and the gardens are carried down and floated away on the river.

Nevertheless the search for a Myth goes on, because poets and painters are aware of their need for some symbolic language, some shorthand of belief, some set of images which can be freely used in æsthetic association, as were those figures of Greek mythology which became universal art language for the educated, and which enjoy a new lease of life since their appropriation by the School of Freud. This search, arising out of *The Golden Bough*, leads us to one of the few mythological poems of our time (T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land*) and to the even more remarkable book behind it. This is Miss Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* (Cambridge, 1920), which, alas, is almost unprocurable. According to Eliot, *The Waste Land* is largely a poetical adaptation of Miss Weston's account of the Grail Legend correlated to the present day (1922), and with some references to Frazer's *Attis: Adonis: Osiris* added.

From *Ritual to Romance* is a daring interpretation of the Grail Legend in terms of the Asiatic religions. According to Miss Weston's analysis the dominating factor is the illness of the Fisher King, who, though rich and in his prime, is suffering from a kind of premature impotence, either through a wound or a mysterious failing. His illness has caused a permanent drought, and it is the object of the young Quester to find the Grail, whereupon, on touching the Cup with his Lance or by some similar ceremony, the Fisher King will be healed (*revenu en sa jeunesse*), and the rain fall on the Waste Land again. In his search for the Grail the Quester passes through a painful ordeal in the ruined Chapel Perilous. Eliot, in his poem, concentrates more on the Waste Land which he identifies with post-war Central Europe, than on the illness of the Fisher King; indeed he makes Phlebas and Tiresias more important as characters. The Fisher King has only two direct mentions. Yet as one reads Miss Weston's book he becomes a more living symbol even than twenty years ago, for he seems the personification of Chamberlain's England, its wealth, its sterility, its mysterious illness, which causes the whole fabulous

capitalist world to dry up: 'Le Roi Pecheors de qui est grant dolors, quar il est cheüz en une douleureuse languor'. It would not be fair to give a résumé of Miss Weston's book, for in reading it one is transported into a whirl of argument and magic that is incommunicable, and where the clouds that hang over the dark ages reveal only glimpses of what may be legendary figures, Gawains and Parsifals, and what may be survivals of the mystery religions brought to Roman garrison towns, to Carlisle and Caerleon-on-Usk, and preserved in the Welsh mountains till someone called Bledericus or Bledri ap Cadivor, a Welsh Quisling who sided with the Norman French, told them his stories, and sent out from remote Pembrokeshire the legend of the cup and the lance, the mystic rejuvenating vessel which was to dazzle medieval Europe. Now that David Jones is at work on some Grail pictures we may hope to see these extraordinary legends reappear in art, for they possess everything, being both pagan and Christian. The Fisher King may be a primitive semi-divine ruler, or Montagu Norman; the Quester may be a Communist, a fighter pilot, or a Californian Messiah. Miss Weston concludes that 'of this one thing we may be sure, the Grail is a living force, it will never die; it may indeed sink out of sight and, for centuries even, disappear from the field of literature, but it will rise to the surface again, and become once more a theme of vital inspiration.' To bring this about the first thing to be done is to reprint her enthralling book. The rest must be left to the young Welsh painters and poets who will, no doubt, extract more from the legends of their compatriot (*famosus ille fabulator*) than did Tennyson and Wagner. Like the Tarot pack, however the symbols are applied their truth remains, for we all live in the Waste Land where the spirit is drying up, and each of us is a Fisher King, ignorantly ruling over our private kingdom, where our radishes have no roots and our lettuces no leaves, and hoping that some Quester will find the answer which will put everything right, as when 'Le Rois pèschéor estoit mués de sa nature et estoit garis de sa maladie et estoit sains comme poissons'.

STEPHEN SPENDER

TOD UND DAS MÄDCHEN

FROM a tree choked by ivy, rotted
By liver-shaped fungus on the bark,
Out of a topmost branch
A single sprig is seen
That shoots against the sky its mark,
As though the dying trunk could launch
The whole life of the sap
Into one wedge-shaped steadfast glance
Above the lapping shining circling evergreen.

So with you,
Where you are lying,
The strong ship of your limbs dragged back
By green tides of regret
And the golden sorrowful flesh
Scorched on by disease,
How difficult is dying
In your living dying eyes!

How tediously the clock kills
When your fading breath
Launches one usual word
Above the stretched body of death.
A trickling water fills
The sad well of your body
With gradual drops of dying
—Yet more love than I ever knew
Still sails upon your eyes.

Oh how, when you have died,
Shall I remember to forget,
And with knives to separate
Your death from my life—
Since, darling, there is never a night

But the restored prime of your youth,
Peaceful, does not float
Upon my sleep as on a boat,
With the glance of love that lives
Inescapably as truth.

VERNON WATKINS

DISCOVERIES

The poles are flying where the two eyes set:
America has not found Columbus yet.

Ptolemy's planets, playing fast and loose,
Foretell the wisdom of Copernicus.

Dante calls *Primum Mobile*, the First Cause :
'Love that moves the world and the other stars.'

Great Galileo, twisted by the rack,
Groans the bright sun from heaven, then breathes it back.

Blake, on the world alighting, holds the skies,
And all the stars shine down through human eyes.

Donne sees those stars, yet will not let them lie:
'We're tapers, too, and at our own cost die.'

The shroud-lamp catches. Lips are smiling there.
'Les flammes—déjà?'—The world dies, or Voltaire.

Swift, a cold mourner at his burial-rite,
Burns to the world's heart like a meteorite.

Beethoven deaf, in deafness hearing all,
Unwinds all music from sound's funeral.

Three prophets fall, the litter of one night :
Blind Milton gazes in fixed deeps of light.

Beggar of those Minute Particulars,
Yeats lights again the turmoil of the stars.

Motionless motion! Come, Tiresias,
The eternal flies, what's passing cannot pass.

'Solace in flight,' old Heraclitus cries;
Light changing to Von Hügel's butterflies.

Rilke bears all, thinks like a tree, believes,
Sinks in the hand that bears the falling leaves.

The stars! The signs! Great Angelo hurls them back.
His whirling ceiling draws the zodiac.

The pulse of Keats testing the axiom;
The second music when the sound is dumb.

The Christian Paradox, bringing its great reward
By loss; the moment known to Kierkegaard.

VERNON WATKINS

THE MOTHER AND CHILD

LET hands be about him white, O his mother's first,
Who caught him, fallen from light through nine months' haste
Of darkness, hid in the worshipping womb, the chaste
Thought of the creature with its certain thirst.
Looking up to her eyes declined that make her fair
He kicks and strikes for joy, reaching for those dumb springs.
He climbs her, sinks, and his mouth under darkness clings
To the night-surrounded milk in the fire of her hair.
She drops her arm, and, feeling the fruit of his lips,
Tends him cunningly. O what secrets are set
In the tomb of each breath, where a world of light in eclipse
Of a darkly worshipping world exults in the joy she gave
Knowing that miracle, miracle to beget,
Springs like a star to her milk, is not for the grave.

EDWARD NEIL

RUSSIAN HOLIDAY

IT is six years since I went to Russia. Some of the material details of my visit are blurred; I still retain the most vivid impressions of persons and atmospheres that I have enjoyed anywhere—a particular flash of a smile, gestures, white silk blouses, snatches of music, shaven heads, argument and crowd-moods that were ordinary enough in themselves but are printed deeply in the back of my mind, like symbols remembered from a childhood dream.

I had for some years been a Communist, of a desultory emotional-intellectual sort—imperfectly disciplined, often a month or two late in getting my Party card stamped up. So I had the advantage of not expecting the Soviet Union to be a Utopia, and was saved from the disappointment that some 'Leftist' writers have expressed so savagely. I took a line midway between these ingenuous extremists and those who seemed to go to Russia in search of damaging evidence rather than of truth. (Sir Walter Citrine, for instance, was obsessed by a shortage of bath-plugs.)

Mine was a holiday visit. I had been working hard, and felt that I might be able to refresh myself in this new civilization without filling too many notebooks with economic and industrial statistics. I remember having some difficulty in impressing on the earnest Russians at the Intourist office in Aldwych (through which one had to apply for one's visa) that I really desired to avoid rather than to share the benefits of the programme of instructive escorted outings that they promised all tourists. In another respect the Intourist handbook was reassuring. 'Evening dress is definitely not needed,' it said. ' . . . for your peace of mind do not make yourself conspicuous in plus-fours or similar unusual attire.'

On the plane I met an old friend, a Jew, also going to Moscow; we took a gloomy pleasure in roaming Nazi Berlin, the two of us—Jew and Communist—protected by the imperial request and—require of whoever was Foreign Secretary when we got our passports.

Now, as I say, I went to Russia determined not to be let down by any initial over-enthusiasm on my own part. I was sure that I

should find much that was incomplete and irritating and inefficient. I had learned only a phrase or two of Russian, such as 'Please, comrade,' and 'Thank you, comrade' (which, after all, cover a good many situations in life). But it was impossible for the half-trained Communist in me not to glow when our Deruluft plane first landed on Soviet soil, and we saw the Red flag flying above the outlandish little shack of an airport; and close-cropped men in shaggy thick clothing, with caps, shuffled their way awkwardly into the plane *as passengers*. In each country, I thought, the ruling class makes use of the best means of transport. This is where workers and peasants travel by air. . . .

I was particularly inclined to romanticize the first Russians I saw because the only book I had been reading on the way was *Anna Karenina*—an exciting book to read for the first time when you are flying to Russia for the first time. Besides this, my suitcase held various articles which cynical dilettanti of travel had advised me to take—Keating's powder, for instance, and Bromo. (The Keating's I never had to use once, and felt ashamed of on my return, when the Customs man at Croydon started prodding the unopened tin. The Bromo was useful: every square inch of Soviet paper was needed for higher cultural purposes, about 150 million people having suddenly become literate.)

We arrived at Moscow in the evening. The Customs were polite, patient, and thorough. Some investigation of documents was clearly included; at one moment I feared that each sheet of my Bromo was going to be examined separately. I regretted being unable to explain in Russian that it was not MS. paper; but refrained from trying to illustrate its real use in the language of signs.

I didn't much like the hotels in Moscow—either my own stuffy palm-and-marble one or the more grandiose one which had been the scene of historic meetings in October 1917. (A much larger, plainer, better-equipped hotel, with a bathroom to every bedroom, was then being built.) These tourist hotels seemed—indeed, were—entirely cut off from the Russian people's everyday life. They were bourgeois enclaves. Only twice did I succeed in persuading ordinary Russian workers to come in for a drink; they were as ill at ease as a London worker is in the Savoy or the Ritz.

Fortunately, several of my own English bourgeois friends were

also in Moscow at this time. Some of them had been to a Persian art congress in Leningrad. One was doing a series of articles for *The Times* (which, I was interested to note, he was able to send home in the diplomatic bag). Their presence helped to make these musty, plushy hotels tolerable. We ate together, enjoying the excellent food—caviar, sturgeon, game were especially plentiful—lamenting the tortoise slowness of the waiters. These were mostly decrepit, sour, and deaf, hangovers from the old régime—employed on the comprehensible theory that they should know how to cope with the gastronomic eccentricities of rich bourgeois, and because young Soviet citizens preferred factory-work to this sycophantic job and had to be protected, anyway, from contamination by possibly undesirable aliens.

At night when we had dined, always very late, we used sometimes to go round to an underground night club in Gorky Street. This was much gayer; I feel that the Webbs would have disapproved of it, and no doubt it was attacked in *Pravda* and eventually condemned. For here one used to find not only bourgeois tourists and foreign diplomats but Red Army commanders drinking and dancing with that complete Russian abandonment to exhilaration that the Diaghilev Ballet used to echo faintly. The place was called the Medjvedj—the Bear. Those little glass carafes on each table held not water but vodka; on a great sword-like skewer a smoking shashlik would be brandished to your plate. The strange twangling music, the gaudy decorations were Caucasian; and every hour or so till dawn a tough and graceful Georgian boy named Batyrbeg would dance wild dagger dances with dervish punctilio.

By day, after some tussles with the Intourist officials at my hotel (bureaucrats of the strictest type, they were horrified to see me escape each morning from the clutch of tourists awaiting guides and charabancs in the lounge¹), I used to wander about

¹ It is fair to them to add that I was, by dodging these conducted tours, which accounted for part of the prepaid inclusive rate of about £1 a day, not getting my 'money's-worth'; it is fair to the Soviet authorities to add that some of the more tiresome of these officials were shortly after this sacked; it is fair to myself to add that I am not entirely frivolous. My friends in England often find me priggishly solemn and socially-conscious. But I was prepared to take the model prisons, crèches, factories and farms for granted. Many specialists had testified to their excellence. We would obviously be shown the best. I wanted, so far as I could, to contact the man in the street.

Moscow as freely as I have wandered about Edinburgh, Palermo, Jerusalem, and other agreeable cities. I bought a phrase-book (the very name of whose publishers, Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga, made it seem hopeless to tackle Russian seriously in the short time I had there), and spent many enjoyable hours pointing to 'I don't speak Russian' (till I learned to say it) and 'Please come with me to the Park of Culture and Rest'. (Alas, the phrase-book was English-Russian only, not Russian-English; so these conversations were one-sided.) The Park was like a bit of old Blackpool in Hyde Park, with tracks and stadia for athletes as well. Hundreds of Comsomols (young Communists) were always queueing up for the parachute-jumping tower—a breath-taking, semi-serious gadget which I saw later at fairs in Brussels and New York.

Of culture¹ in the narrower sense there was plenty. I paid several visits to the Museum of Modern Western Art, which has what must I think be the largest collection of Picassos in the world. A sugar millionaire's private collection was the nucleus of this museum; most of the pictures were pre-1917. Peasant delegates from the country, up for some conference, would trudge painstakingly round, scrutinizing the pictures, studying the long interpretative notes displayed below them; these would often express disapproval of a modern picture as a manifestation of bourgeois decadence, while granting it technical brilliance. 'Socialist realism' was the slogan which crystallized the approved style in art. Abstract experiments were condemned as Leftist: 'the real historic development of Soviet art,' wrote an authority, 'proceeded on the principle of critical assimilation of the art of past centuries'.

Similarly, another authority wrote: 'The methods of "functional architecture" could satisfy the requirements of Soviet society only during the first period of construction. . . . ' Later, towards the end of the first five-year-plan period, the rising standard of living brought demands for 'artistic quality' in new buildings. The 'fetishism of technique' was officially rejected in favour of a critical re-formation of the classic styles.

¹ 'The divorce of "culture" from the life of ordinary people springs from the fact that "culture" has come to be thought of as something separate from or opposed to that body of practical knowledge which is appropriate to understanding the modern world.'—T. C. Worsley in *The End of the 'Old School Tie'* (Secker & Warburg). He writes of Britain; this could not be said of the U.S.S.R.

The first results of this new policy, as I saw them in Moscow, seemed to me deplorable. The new American Embassy, for instance, was covered incongruously with hideous Corinthian pilasters. I was told privately—but could not check—that one cause of the reaction against functionalism had been the impermanence of some Corbusier-type buildings. They had been built hurriedly; there was either shoddy work or sabotage; they started cracking up quickly. Then too, with increased prosperity, there was a tendency to copy the more lavish superficialities of Western culture: 'the best is good enough for us'. No doubt by now some Soviet architects have achieved what they were looking for—'an organic unity of technical function and artistic form'. Even then I saw some new theatres—e.g. at Rostov-on-Don—sanatoria, and workers' clubs which were satisfactory from either point of view.

In London I can hardly ever drag myself to a theatre. The dreadful drawing-room comedy: the curtain rises on the butler setting out the cocktails, skirmishing with the maid. The screaming farce: in and out of the cardboard bedrooms, in and out of the comically loud trousers. The lady playwright's homey analysis of suburban complexes: the wise but formidable matriarch, the tender aunt, the restless daughter. . . . Which makes you the sickest?

In Moscow it isn't just 'propaganda' to say that I found the theatre really exciting. I remember best two shows—one traditionally done, by the Moscow Art Theatre, one experimental. The latter was 'Aristocrats' (since done in English by Unity Theatre, London). It was performed on a figure-of-8-shaped stage in the midst of the audience, who joined in now and then. A friend who sat with me explained what was happening; even without understanding the words I was fascinated by the characterization and the spirited tempo of the production. The other show was Dickensian: a Russian operatic version of 'Pickwick', done in a mood of rather Playfairish whimsy; but solider and swifter. It was extraordinary and amusing to hear recognizably Cockney characters, dressed as Victorian Englishmen, talking and singing Russian. The audience, like all the Moscow audiences I was in, were crowded and responsive.

There was a considerable Dickens vogue. Enormous editions of translations of his works were being printed. In the bookshop

windows I also saw translations of Cecil Aldin's dog books. What I preferred—and bought—were some of the Russian illustrated children's books. I still have these; they have delighted many English children. One shows animals—rabbits, elephants, an angry bear, a kitten—learning to use the telephone. One shows a naughty boy who won't wash, and the punishment that befalls him. The furniture comes to Disneyesque life: nailbrushes and sponges take wings and belabour him, washstands and jugs spit a scornful inundation on him.

It is often said that the Russian people 'aren't allowed' to know anything of life in other countries. But they are allowed, and encouraged, to read the books of other countries—not only Marxist books, either. From our classics, as well as from recent literature, I think they may have picked up a fair idea of what the English people are like.

Certainly they were aware of the classical literature of other nations. About this time Dimitrov (whose portrait 30 ft. high—as large as Stalin's beside it—stared down from a building near my hotel) had been talking to the Soviet Writers' Association about Cervantes: 'In the hands of the revolutionary bourgeoisie "Don Quixote" was a powerful instrument in the struggle against feudalism. . . . The revolutionary proletariat knows the need of a Cervantes—even a little Cervantes would do—able to give us a weapon like that!' (Laughter and applause.)

But the most notable of all Soviet contributions to art has been, perhaps, in the cinema. Many Londoners still remember, thirstily, such stupendous films as 'The General Line,' 'Mother,' 'Storm Over Asia,' and 'Ten Days That Shook the World'. This was the new civilization at its most virile and profound. I met Eisenstein, leading Soviet film-director. He drove me up to his studios. He had a car for his own use: it had been voted to him by his trade organization. What a worker of any kind needed or deserved in the way of such personal possessions seemed usually to be provided for him. Intellectuals and technicians were particularly well off. A popular novelist had 'dried up', partly on account of illness; he had not produced a new book for several years. He was still being maintained by the State, and had been sent repeatedly for free courses of treatment and convalescence to sanatoria on the Black Sea riviera. Another film-director had accumulated large 'royalties' on one successful film: he was able to buy various

small extra luxuries—‘but of course,’ it was explained to me, ‘it’s really no use to him to have all that money; he can’t misuse it as he could in a capitalist country; he can’t build a factory with it, and exploit labour, and live on the profits. . . .’

Among the less happy foreign intellectuals in Moscow were a few homosexuals. The Soviet Government, abandoning the ‘liberal’ attitude to this problem which remained officially enshrined in the Soviet Encyclopædia, had imposed drastic penalties; as in heterosexual relationships, what was especially condemned was any taint of prostitution or exploitation of a junior by a citizen in a responsible position. One tortured American technician begged me to induce Shaw and other English writers to write to Maxim Gorky asking him to influence Stalin towards a more tolerant treatment of homosexuals. I went to see Shaw on my return: he was not in the least interested, dickered brilliantly round the subject for half-an-hour, and said he was sure the Soviet authorities must have had strong reasons for taking this action. Meanwhile, many of the leading male ballet dancers of Moscow had been sent off to prison camp (where they were allowed to continue their artistic activities); so that it was commonly said that you had to go to that prison camp to see the best ballet.

It was about this time, too, that the reaction against the ‘free-love’ idea of some of the early Bolsheviks was at its strongest. (Lenin himself did not share their anarchistic view of personal relationships.) Both divorce and abortion were made slightly more difficult to obtain than they had been; the unsettling effect on Party work (the paramount consideration) of constant amorous adventures was realized. There was, in fact, a pragmatic tendency towards the Christian theory of marriage—that it should be monogamous, fertile, permanent.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has notably refused to endorse the attitude towards Soviet participation in the war adopted by some English Roman Catholics: they hope, avowedly, that the war may result in a ‘Christian revolution’ in Russia, and the overthrowing of the ‘godless tyranny’ of the Kremlin—a hope which equates itself closely with Nazi war-aims. The Archbishop, carefully and specifically, wishes success to the Soviet Government (and, of course, ‘a new resurgence of the interests of religion’). A reconciliation between the Archbishop and the Dean

of Canterbury would be one of the minor and pleasanter fantasies of this war. The Dean has always urged that, essentially, Soviet civilization is more Christian than our own: there, alone in the world, is there a practical, deliberate attempt to make brotherly love the basis of the national economy, the motive of all work.

Even in 1935 there was far less in Russia to shock the English Christian than you would have supposed from anti-Soviet (and largely Rome-inspired) propaganda. I went to one of the 'anti-religious' museums, vaguely expecting Tussauesque horrors. Instead, one might have been in the Victoria and Albert, or at a museum of anthropology: there were handsome carved idols from West Africa, and well-displayed, well-cared-for collections of Christian vestments and plate. There was nothing to compete, in vulgarity or luridness, with any extreme Protestant account of the Inquisition.

I attended one service in Moscow, at a big Orthodox church in the suburbs. The congregation was large, and mostly elderly, of the breast-beating, runny-eyed, matted-beard type—though there were also a few young Red Army men and peasant girls, who crossed themselves constantly in the slow, spacious, intent Orthodox way, kissed icons, and seemed to have no fear of being victimized by lurking OGPU agents. The choir was as mellow, fruity, resonant, and rhythmical as in all Orthodox churches. Crouching by the door of the church were a few old sore-scratching, stump-advertising mumblers—the only beggars I saw in the whole of my visit to Russia.

It was when I had left Moscow, with its tourists and foreign technicians and anti-Soviet correspondents and fatigued diplomats, that I really began to enjoy Russia. I now found few who could speak English; I had to rely on my phrase-book and on the frank eye-to-eye smile that will often convince even those who cannot understand your dumbness that you mean them no harm. I flew south by civil air-line, having escaped by a preternatural effort from the Intourist governesses; the plane was a six-seater, not very new or fast; the pilot was young—about nineteen or twenty—with a closely-cropped bullet-head, excellent teeth, a round, high-cheekboned face, and ingenuous serious eyes that would crinkle engagingly in sudden laughter. He was an able and careful aviator. There was little pretence of getting the plane there

on schedule; the passengers' safety was more important. At each stop the weather reports from further on were closely pondered; if even slight clouds seemed to be looming, we would wait, for hours if need be, till they dispersed.

I left the plane at a Caucasian mountain resort, formerly Vladikafkas, renamed, in honour of a Soviet leader, Ordjonikidze. Here, indeed, I was glad to make friends with an Intourist guide—a gay, quick young woman with dark untidy hair and an olive skin. With two Communist youths, friends of hers—a dancer and a building worker on holiday—we went for long mountain walks, carrying loaves and caviare and bottles of rough local wine, picnicking by idyllic torrents, visiting old astrakhan-capped shepherds in their remote hamlets and startlingly new sanatoria that had sprung up among the pinewoods. One of the boys was Russian; the other, the dancer, could hardly speak Russian at all; his language was Georgian. (I heard much of the enlightened Soviet reversal of Tsarist policy, which had for centuries repressed the individual cultures and languages of the subject—now associated—peoples.) Luckily, our girl guide could speak Russian, Georgian, and English. She was silenced only once—when we met a shepherd who couldn't speak even Georgian.

Tiflis was more of an Oriental city than any I had yet seen in the U.S.S.R. It had the bazaar-smells, the dusky, turbaned faces, the mysterious bells, the saffron flavour of a Cairo or a Calcutta; here was the junction, the merging and transmutation of several European and Asiatic cultures. There were still what must be called slums here; however 'picturesque', they were being pulled down pretty quickly. 'This is where workers have to live,' they said, averting their faces in shame and distaste. 'We do not care if bourgeois tourists think them pretty.' But there seemed to be no threat to the many tall-cupola'd churches of Tiflis. In street-markets I bought enormous melons and the best socks—of coarsely-woven yet fine local wool—that I have ever worn. I went into the public baths but was too timid to have one: there seemed to be, amid the clouds of steam, a good deal of agonizing but hilarious mutual flogging with boughs and branches.

From Tiflis I went by train down to the Black Sea. There were four of us in bunks in the sleeping-compartment—a Red Army Commander, a peasant grandfather, a stout woman; it was clean and reasonably comfortable; we shared our food; none of them

had any difficulty in contributing plenty to the common meal. The old peasant crooned a little before we went to sleep; he sang one of the songs I had heard the night before at a riotous funeral celebration into which I had strayed in a Tiflis basement café. (This was the only time I saw really wild drunkenness after the traditional Russian style. A Comsomol gulped a whole tumbler of vodka straight down, and fell flat on the floor. I was told that his inebriacy had delayed his promotion to the Party itself; he would certainly be censured for this new outburst, perhaps even expelled. Our host, a soldier, wept quietly for his dead father; that very day, too, his wife had given birth to a son in hospital; he intended to name the baby after its dead grandfather, he said, kissing me wetly on both cheeks.)

So friendly was the atmosphere in this train that I mentioned—a fact I hadn't tried to make use of in Russia—that I was a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The news was received with an awe and an admiration that made me feel intensely ashamed. To them I was a member of the great leadership-organization that they saw incessantly at work, with its high standards of political knowledge and personal austerity of life; none but the most active and ardent could earn admittance to these responsibilities, this fellowship. Moreover, I was a member *in partibus infidelium*; I was, as we say now, 'in the front line'. They fingered my Party-card with touching reverence. I felt acutely conscious of my own unworthiness: how slight and sporadic had been the work I had done for the Party, how inadequate—because there were too many like me—the impact of the Party on the workers of Britain!

The Black Sea and Crimea coasts, along which I made my way to Odessa in a small pleasure-steamer, were a paradisaic postscript to my Russian trip. Here, stretched out naked on riviera sands or diving from rocks into water as blue as the Mediterranean, or convalescent in ornate, once-private parks and rococo villas and new glass-and-concrete hostels, or dancing by night in the open air, were hundreds of thousands of workers from all parts of the Soviet Union: mostly industrial workers, but some writers and artists among them. Each Union or other organization—the Red Army, for instance—had its own hostels, to which those of its members who most needed such a holiday were sent, by free vote of their comrades, with all expenses paid. The memory of this

coast has returned overpoweringly in later years, when pompous Britons have said to me—most hackneyed and absurd of anti-Soviet arguments—‘Ah, but you only saw what they wanted you to see.’ To which the reply is either ‘Well, go and see for yourself’ or ‘I’d like to see something like it in England, anyway’.

My companion on this trip, as far as Sebastopol, was an earnest and charming young Red Army man who had, fortunately, been learning English. English was much studied in the Army, he told me. The first words he spoke to me, when we had introduced ourselves, were, ‘Do you know “The Picture of Dorian Gray”? It is very beautiful’.

All too soon I had left him, and this delightful riviera, and the prosperous city of Odessa (where is the immense flight of steps that many will recall seeing in the ‘Potemkin’ film). I had to return to work, a missionary *in partibus*. . . . After what I had seen and experienced, my own land seemed flat, stale, and intolerably obsessed with Profit. But it was still my own land; my task lay here.

MARTIN TURNELL

ELDORADO BANAL

A Study of Baudelaire

Quelle est cette île triste et noire?—C’est Cythère,
Nous dit-on, un pays fameux dans les chansons,
Eldorado banal de tous les vieux garçons.
Regardez, après tout, c’est une pauvre terre.’

(*Un Voyage à Cythère*)

IN *Le Voyage* Baudelaire describes a little band of explorers setting out on a voyage round the world. They leave in a mood of great elation, but it changes almost at once to a mood of profound disillusionment. They see strange sights; they have novel experiences; but when they return, they confess that they were often as bored during the voyage as they had been at home. The world had turned out to be a small place and they were confronted everywhere by the same dreary spectacle of *l’immortel péché*. They

finish exactly where they started and there is nothing to do except to set out again on the same journey, a little battered, it is true, but still buoyed up by the same vain hopes of tracking down that very vague and elusive goal *du nouveau* which will provide relief from the boredom of their lives and a panacea for all ills.

Baudelaire's poetry is filled with voyages and plans for voyages. There are voyages round the world, voyages to fabulous islands, voyages round Paris, and even the 'voyage' of a bored monk pacing ceaselessly round and round his narrow cell. This passionate interest in travel is characteristic of modern poetry, but it is not altogether new. It had already made its appearance in medieval poetry, yet there is a world of difference between the journeys described in *The Divine Comedy* or *The Canterbury Tales* and those described in *Le Voyage* or *Le Bateau ivre*. The medieval poet was a pilgrim moving steadily towards a known goal and overcoming all obstacles in a spirit of Christian fortitude. Baudelaire was no pilgrim: he was in a special sense a tourist whose goal remained tantalisingly unknown, and he comments ironically on the singular fortune that led him to embark on a voyage *où le but se déplace*.

The voyages that he plans are many and varied, but the traveller is always the same. When we turn the pages of the *Fleurs du mal* we are constantly coming face to face with a solitary figure wearing a frock coat and black cashmere trousers, with a high waistcoat unbuttoned at the top to display a shirt of the finest linen partly hidden by the flowing black silk tie, and a curious conical-shaped top hat—*un chapeau important*, as one of his contemporaries admiringly called it—of his own design. The deep furrows round the mouth, the expression of suffering on his face and the thinning grey hair escaping under the hat make him appear more than his forty years; and when you look at him closely you notice that the clothes, too, are showing signs of wear that careful treatment is doing its best to conceal.

He moves slowly along the banks of the Seine, pausing, perhaps, to flick over the pages of a book on one of the *bouquinistes'* stalls—he is an authority on the erotic writings of the seventeenth century—then he continues his walk into the poorer parts of the city, a strange and incongruous figure in his splendid apparel. His eyes are fixed moodily on the ground as he broods over his debts, the trouble that he has had with his landlady and the

begging letter that he will have to write to his mother. From time to time he glances up at the *concierges* shuffling along in their carpet slippers on their way to market. His feelings are mixed. The tall buildings remind him of the masts of ships and the possibility of flight from these sordid surroundings to some exotic island; but he puts the thought out of his mind and returns to the fascinated contemplation of the problem of civilized man trapped amid the squalid horrors of modern industrialism.

For the setting as well as the purpose of the journey has changed. Dante's careful, logical universe with its heaven above and its hell beneath and Chaucer's wide tranquil English countryside have been replaced by the shapeless indifference of the great modern city. There are striking similarities between the 'Eldorado banal', with its symbolic figure dangling on the end of the gibbet, and 'the Waste Land', where the ruined impotent monarch reigns,¹ between Baudelaire's Paris and Eliot's London. Baudelaire's Paris is not a local affair, a mere emanation of his personal sensibility as Laforgue's is. Its significance is universal. It is the modern world and it is a sign of Baudelaire's greatness that he manages to present this world as a physical—a terrifyingly oppressive physical—reality.

The theme of the *Fleurs du mal* is a circular tour of the modern world which begins with *Bénédiction* and closes with *Le Voyage*. In the course of this circular tour Baudelaire examines all the great spiritual problems of the age. His age was a turning point in contemporary European history. Its materialism, its complacency and its facile slogans sapped the morale of the people and prepared the way for disaster. No one saw the dangers more clearly than Baudelaire, and it is because his age is still our age that he speaks to us more urgently, more intimately than any other modern poet.

Baudelaire's choice of theme gives his poetry its distinctive style. When you read some of his most characteristic pieces like *Le Beau navire*, *Le Balcon*, *La Chevelure*, *Un Voyage à Cythère* and *Le Voyage*, you find that a highly personal movement is common to them all. It is not a *forward* movement but a *circular* movement. A monologue in a play of Racine's, for example, moves steadily forward from one point to another and carries the whole play a

¹ Cf. 'Je suis comme le roi d'un pays pluvieux,
Riche, mais impuissant, jeune et pourtant très vieux. . . .'

stage further. Baudelaire's method is different. He takes a scene or a situation and examines it from every angle until the last drop of feeling has been extracted from it, but in the end he always returns to the starting place. All sorts of mysterious feelings emerge from the analysis, yet there is no development of feeling and the dominant mood remains unaltered.

'The only praise that I ask for this book', he wrote in the letter to Alfred de Vigny which accompanied a presentation copy of the second edition of the *Fleurs du mal*, 'is the recognition that it is not a mere album of verse, but that it has a beginning and an end. All the new poems are designed to fit into a singular framework that I had chosen.'¹

It is this personal movement which gives the *Fleurs du mal* their unity and is, in fact, the *cadre singulier* that he refers to in the letter. His book is really one poem. All the principal pieces are built into this framework so that the whole book is present in each of the component parts, and this gives it its solidity and its internal coherence.

At the same time it must be recognized that the movement of his verse is a destructive movement. Images suggesting a circular movement recur constantly like shorthand references:

Mais la tristesse en moi monte comme la mer . . .

Onduleux, mon Désir qui monte et qui descend. . . .

The sea is a symbol of liberation in his poetry, but it is also a symbol of ceaseless, exhausting movement which brings no rest and no relief. Desires revolve in a circle, rising and falling, shifting and changing, until at last feelings destroy themselves by their own internal friction.

The poet's aim is a thorough examination of man and his surroundings, but though the 'tourist' always returns to his starting point and always talks of setting out again in pursuit of his elusive goal, the stresses of the voyage undermine his personality until they finally produce a state of complete interior collapse.

It can now be seen that the originality of Baudelaire's vision is inseparable from his remarkable technical originality, and this

¹ *Lettres 1841-1866*, Paris, 1906, p. 323.

gives him his immense stature among modern poets. He was not the leader of a literary movement: he was the founder of a school of poetry. There is a sharp distinction between a movement like the Romantic Movement and the School of Baudelaire. A literary movement means that a number of poets use a similar style to express feelings which are to some extent common to them all. The founder of a school is the creator of a fresh attitude towards the universe and the inventor of a new style. He succeeds in handing on his outlook and certain elements of his style to his successors who, within the limits of this framework, express their individual reactions to the new situation. Without Baudelaire there might have been no Corbière and no Laforgue, and Rimbaud would have been a very different poet.

It is a tribute to Baudelaire's vitality that after some early imitations of his work the development of later writers was always *away* from the master. It means that his poetry, instead of inviting imitation, was a genuine source of inspiration, a stimulus that encouraged further experiments and discoveries.

II

'Il y avait autre chose dans *les Fleurs du mal* qu'un "frisson nouveau",' wrote Remy de Gourmont; 'il y avait un retour au vers français traditionnel.' There is a tendency among some of Baudelaire's critics to treat him as an isolated figure, but his poetry can only be fully appreciated when it is seen as part of the main French tradition. His relations with the seventeenth century and the Romantic Movement must be clearly grasped, and in stressing the combination of classical diction and a modern sensibility Gourmont put his finger on the essential point.

His relations with the seventeenth century can be seen most clearly in 'J'aime le souvenir':

J'aime le souvenir de ces époques nues,
Dont Phœbus se plaisait à dorer les statues.
Alors l'homme et la femme en leur agilité
Jouissaient sans mensonge et sans anxiété,
Et, le ciel amoureux leur caressant l'échine,
Exerçaient la santé de leur noble machine.
Cybèle alors, fertile en produits généreux,
Ne trouvait point ses fils un poids trop onéreux,

Mais, louve au cœur gonflé de tendresses communes,
Abreuvait l'univers à ses tétines brunes.

L'homme, élégant, robuste et fort, avait le droit
D'être fier des beautés qui le nommaient leur roi;
Fruits purs de tout outrage et vierges de gerçures,
Dont la chair lisse et ferme appelait les morsures!

Le Poète aujourd'hui, quand il veut concevoir
Ces natives grandeurs, aux lieux où se font voir
La nudité de l'homme et celle de la femme,
Sent un froid ténébreux envelopper son âme
Devant ce noir tableau plein d'épouvantement.

O monstruosité pleurant leur vêtement!

O ridicules troncs! torses dignes des masques!

O pauvres corps tordus, maigres, ventrus ou flasques,
Que le dieu de l'Utile, implacable et serein,
Enfants, emmaillota dans ses langes d'airain!

A critic of Mr. Middleton Murry's distinction has been able to say that Baudelaire 'made no technical innovations'. Now, it seems to me that his use of the alexandrine in this poem is an innovation of capital importance. He does not use it, as Corneille had done, to express the regularity, the stability of an established order. He uses it to express the sudden realization that the old order had vanished. He also uses it to express what might be termed an alien order, the tyranny of the new industrialism which had destroyed the old social solidarity and was gradually stifling man's natural human aspirations. The old order is deliberately evoked and the use of traditional French versification in the grand manner makes it a perpetual point of reference, a standard by which the present is tested and judged.¹

¹ I have limited the contrast to Corneille as it clearly does not apply in the same degree to Racine. Modern writers have stressed the resemblances between Racine and Baudelaire. It is easy to find verbal parallels between the two poets, but it must be remembered that these parallels were caused by a similarity in their positions. It is true that in a sense Racine's poetry reflects an order, but as I have tried to show in another place, this order was disintegrating from within. The focus was already shifting in Racine's time from the community to the individual life. The exploration of the unconscious had already begun; there was already a contrast between the regularity of the verse-form and the dissolution of feeling for which it was a vehicle. It is for this reason that, in spite of differences which will be discussed later, Baudelaire seems to continue something which had begun with Racine.

The poem seems at first to be a nostalgic longing to return to some simpler form of society, and we might pardonably mistake *l'homme, élégant, robuste et fort* for a character who had strayed from the pages of the *Contrat social*. *Souvenir*, however, is one of the words on which Baudelaire, like all very great poets, had set his personal stamp. Memory is a treasure house in which past experience is meditated and transformed. In this poem it is used to intensify the contrast between the old and the new orders, and in other poems it is used to suggest possible modes of fresh experience.¹ The statement of his theme is deliberately stylised and the irony behind 'Phœbus' and 'Cybèle', with their rococo associations, rules out any suggestion of sentimentality. The positive values suggested by *agilité*, *fertile* and *produits généreux*—*généreux* was a favourite word of Corneille's—are completely realized. Man's physical health is a symbol of spiritual health and Baudelaire is careful to stress the absence of that gnawing sense of insecurity which has been the source of many of our troubles. He also stresses the fact that these benefits were enjoyed in common (*tendresses communes*), but this enhances instead of diminishing the dignity of the individual life.

The reference to *droit* is interesting. The words *loi* and *droit* are constantly found in seventeenth-century poetry. They are the expression of the poet's sense of the existence of an established order. They are very seldom used by Baudelaire because he was preoccupied by the disappearance of this order. In its present context, *droit* implies that the society described was healthy because it was founded on a balance of rights and duties.

There is a sudden transition from the old order to the new, and the second section of the poem is a remarkable statement of one of the crucial problems of our time. There is always in Baudelaire's poetry a contrast between the hard, metallic words and words suggesting softness, corruption and collapse. They are juxtaposed in such a way that the hard words bring out the softness of the other words. The diction, too, becomes more complex

¹ The process is well illustrated by some lines from *La Chevelure*, which is built up round this conception of memory:

'Extase! Pour peupler ce soir l'alcôve obscure
Des souvenirs dormant dans cette chevelure,
Je la veux agiter dans l'air comme un mouchoir!'

As an instance of Baudelaire's brilliant use of the word:

'Ton souvenir en moi luit comme un ostensorio'

and we are made to feel with great skill the *dieu de l'Utile* enfolding his 'children', who were once *élégant(s)*, *robuste(s)* et *fort(s)* in the *langes d'airain* from which they emerge *tordus, maigres, ventrus ou flasques*. They have been transformed by an unnatural upbringing into misshapen, shrunken, flabby, paunchy robots, into the anonymous slaves of a hideous machine. *Serein* and *implacable* underline the ruthlessness of the new Moloch.

The capital letter is a sign of the Poet's consciousness of his increased responsibility in a changing civilization. 'Si un poète demandait à l'État le droit d'avoir quelques bourgeois dans son écurie', he wrote in his diary, 'on serait fort étonné, tandis que si un bourgeois demandait du poète rôti, on le trouverait tout naturel'. Baudelaire was something of a *mystificateur*, but his 'dandyism' is not to be confused with the more spectacular gestures of his contemporaries whose highly coloured waistcoats and pranks with lobsters were forms of psychological compensation, were attempts to reassert themselves and to impress a section of the community that they feared and hated. His dandyism sprang from a genuine concern for human integrity. The poet had become the lonely champion of civilized values in a hostile society. What Baudelaire was fighting for is well expressed in two splendid lines:

De l'antique Vénus le superbe fantôme

Mais les bijoux perdus de l'antique Palmyre

The rich associations of *l'antique Vénus* and *l'antique Palmyre* stand for a great civilization which has completely vanished.

One of the principal differences between the literature of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries is that in the seventeenth century the poet had the weight of society behind him and in the nineteenth century he was the solitary opponent of an antagonistic society. The surprising thing about the nineteenth century is not that it was one of the greatest ages of French literature, but that in such an age there should have been any literature at all. Baudelaire's greatness does not consist least in the fact that he did not adopt a passive standpoint like the Romantics. In his poetry the antagonism between the poet and society became a positive factor of incalculable value, and the poetry was actually created by the resistance of the poet to the general tendencies of his age.

'J'aime le souvenir' is a general statement of the situation in which the poet found himself. In other poems he fills in the details of the picture. The impact of a hostile environment had become so much a part of his consciousness that he speaks of the world with its *voûte d'airain* and in another poem he writes:

Quand le ciel bas et lourd pèse *comme un couvercle*
 Sur l'esprit gémissant en proie aux longs ennuis,
 Et que de l'horizon embrassant *tout le cercle*
 Il nous verse un jour plus triste que les nuits. . . .

bringing home to us the sense of constriction and oppression that weighs on the poet imprisoned—the familiar image is there—in a circle.

In *Rêve parisien* he evokes the steel world where he is a prisoner:

. . . peintre fier de mon génie,
 Je savourais dans mon tableau
 L'enivrante monotonie
 Du métal, du marbre et de l'eau.

Babel d'escaliers et d'arcades,
 C'était un palais infini,
 Plein de bassins et de cascades
 Tombant dans l'or mat ou bruni;

Et des cataractes pesantes,
 Comme des rideaux de cristal,
 Se suspendaient, éblouissantes,
 A des murailles de métal. . . .

The natural propensity of water is to flow, but in this world water loses its natural properties and is suspended motionless *comme des rideaux de cristal*.

The poet finds that his material has gone rigid and hard, for human faculties have not escaped the general process of petrification. In the lines:

Je suis belle, ô mortels! *comme un rêve de pierre*,
 Et mon sein, où chacun s'est meurtri tour à tour,
 Est fait pour inspirer au poète un amour
 Éternel et muet ainsi que la matière.

the effect depends on the contrast between the fluid 'dream'

and the rigid 'stone'. There are two distinct processes at work in Baudelaire's poetry. The domination of metal and stone, the sense of the fluid becoming solid, of the human becoming part of a soulless machine, gives his world its strange nightmare quality. This quality is heightened by a reverse process, by the disconcerting way in which cracks and fissures suddenly appear and the surface, which looks so solid, disintegrates to reveal the *néant*, the *gouffre* that lies beneath.

This brings us to one of the most striking of Baudelaire's technical devices. The poem which begins 'Avec ses vêtements ondoiyants et nacrés' closes with the lines:

Ses yeux polis sont faits de minéraux charmants,
Et dans cette nature étrange et symbolique
Où l'ange inviolé se mêle au sphinx antique,

Où tout n'est qu'or, acier, lumière et diamants,
Resplendit à jamais, comme un astre inutile,
La froide majesté de la femme stérile.

The mechanical courtesan of this poem, who is a sister of the 'enchantress' of the *Beau navire* and the heroine with the 'granite skin' in *Allégorie*, is a symbol not merely of 'the new woman', but of the new civilization. She knows all the tricks for pleasing, is well versed in the art of what Baudelaire called *le savant amour*: but beneath the brilliant exterior there is nothing. She is a sort of automatic machine for sexual intercourse.¹ The climax is achieved by the contrast between *froide majesté* and *femme stérile*. The machinery suddenly collapses, leaving only a tangled mass of broken springs and shattered properties. The judgement implied is a moral judgement, and by placing the *stérile* at the end of the last line Baudelaire makes us feel that the impact of the whole poem is behind this one word.

There is a still more impressive example in the terrific image at the close of the *Femmes damnées*:

L'âpre stérilité de votre jouissance
Altère votre soif et roidit votre peau,
Et le vent furibond de la concupiscence
Fait claquer votre chair ainsi qu'un vieux drapeau.

The climax can only be fully appreciated when it is remembered

¹ Cf. 'Machine aveugle et sourde, en cruautés féconde'.

that eighty lines of the poem are devoted to a detailed description of the soft and voluptuous atmosphere of the perverse loves which are its subject. Then, suddenly, the smooth skin withers, shrinks and bursts under the fiery blast of the wind and we hear only the flapping of the tattered banner on its pole. *Stérilité* is the pivot of the whole poem. Baudelaire certainly means us to regard sexual perversity as the symbol of an unnatural civilization, but there is no moralizing. His attitude, which is one of strict ethical orthodoxy, is completely fused in the poetic image.

The word *rêve* has occurred more than once in the passages discussed above and it provides a clue to Baudelaire's vision. The 'dream' is a *dédoublement* which enables us to see life simultaneously under two different aspects. A number of critics have drawn attention to the exactness of his descriptions of urban civilization, to lines like:

Le long du vieux faubourg, où pendent aux mesures
Les persiennes, abri des secrètes luxures. . . .

La Prostitution s'allume dans les rues;
Comme une fourmilière elle ouvre ses issues. . . .

He has succeeded better than any other modern poet in conveying the atmosphere of a great modern city—the mists rising over the Seine at dawn, the sun beating down remorselessly on the dry, dusty streets at noon, the sinister procession of beggars, murderers, drunkards, prostitutes and rag-pickers slinking through the twilight—and he owes his success to the combination of highly stylised imagery with a remarkable degree of realism, to the mingling of the dream-world and the actual world that we find in

Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,
Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant!

where the city of swarming multitudes is also the city of 'dreams', where the apparition clutches us by the arm 'in broad daylight'. He contrives to give us at one and the same time the brute fact and its interpretation.

The *Tableaux Parisiens* have been called 'objective studies pencilled in the margin of the principal tragedy'. They seem to me to have a more important purpose, to be an essential part of the

Fleurs du mal. The robots in 'J'aime le souvenir' are generalized figures, but in the *Tableaux Parisiens* the poet brings the particular individual before our eyes:

Il n'était pas voûté, mais cassé, son échine
Faisant avec sa jambe un parfait angle droit.

Ces monstres disloqués furent jadis des femmes,
Éponine ou Laïs!—Monstres brisés, bossus
Ou tordus, aimons-les! ce sont encor des âmes.
Sous des jupons troués et sous de froids tissus

Ils rampent, flagellés par des bises iniques,
Frémissant au fracas roulant des omnibus,
Et serrant sur leur flanc, ainsi que des reliques,
Un petit sac brodé de fleurs ou de rébus. . . .

There is a deliberate element of distortion in these lines which provides a comment on the civilization which produces such people. The total effect is one of macabre comedy which is peculiarly Baudelaire's own. His special concern is with the destructive nature of contemporary life, and the accent falls on the words *cassé*, *brisés*, *disloqués*. The drama is not so much described as enacted. We hear the snap of breaking bone in *cassé* and the queer shuffling tread of the down-and-outs in *disloqués*.

Baudelaire sometimes uses theological terms in an ambiguous way, but the words *âme*, *ange*, *péché* and *mal* are usually employed in a strictly orthodox sense. In

. . . aimons-les! ce sont encor des âmes

or

Dans la brute assoupie un *ange* se réveille

the words *âmes* and *ange* represent positive values. It is Baudelaire's consciousness of the worth of the individual soul which is being destroyed that makes his view of the modern world essentially a tragic one and the ironic 'Éponine ou Laïs!' intensifies the tragedy.

'Tout enfant', wrote Baudelaire, 'j'ai senti dans mon cœur deux sentiments contradictoires: l'horreur de la vie et l'extase de la vie.' His sense of the splendour and squalor of this city of flickering *becs de gaz*, small theatres with their flaming gas jets,

their smell of sawdust and resin and their tawdry trappings, has been expressed in some famous and beautiful lines that I cannot resist the temptation to quote:

—J'ai vu parfois, au fond d'un théâtre banal
 Qu'enflammait l'orchestre sonore,
 Une fée allumer dans un ciel infernal
 Une miraculeuse aurore;
 J'ai vu parfois au fond d'un théâtre banal
 Un être, qui n'était que lumière, or et gaze,
 Terrasser l'énorme Satan;
 Mais mon cœur, que jamais ne visite l'extase,
 Est un théâtre où l'on attend
 Toujours, toujours en vain, l'Etre aux ailes de gaze!

Baudelaire uses the words *banal*, *fané*, *suranné* and *défunt* to express his very personal sense of disenchantment. In the *théâtre banal* of this poem and the *Eldorado banal* of another, the hopes aroused by *théâtre* and *Eldorado* are crushed by the finality of *banal*, and the poet is left waiting for the 'miraculous dawn' and the 'ecstasy' that he knows will never come.

The poem is interesting for another reason. 'Un poème de Baudelaire', wrote Jacques Rivière,¹ 'est un système fermé; tout y regarde vers l'intérieur; les vers se tiennent ensemble comme des personnes assemblées en cercle. C'est parce que l'objet qu'ils expriment est un sentiment, quelque chose d'entièrement contenu dans l'âme, quelque chose qu'elle entoure et circonvient de toutes parts.' Baudelaire was driven by the disappearance of the old order to turn his eyes inwards, to burrow deeper and deeper into his own inner life in the hope, no doubt, of coming to some fresh common ground, but also because he was aware that the sensitive and highly civilized individual must provide the standards that were once provided by the community. The rhythms of his poetry weave themselves into our consciousness and in lines like

La nuit s'épaississait ainsi qu'une cloison

a screen seems to be interposed between the speaker and the outer world, isolating him on the 'balcony' or in some *alcôve obscure*

¹ Rimbaud, Paris, 1930, pp. 185-6.

where he can give his undivided attention to the exploration of his own inner life. Baudelaire was essentially an individualist, and whatever the starting point the way always leads back to 'the world within' where the main drama takes place. It is not true to say that he was not interested in the external world. He undoubtedly was, and it was the skill with which he held the balance between the two and succeeded in revealing the repercussions of events in his own mind that prevented him from becoming a poet of the Ivory Tower. The sudden change from the *théâtre banal* to

Mais mon cœur, que jamais ne visite l'extase,
Est un théâtre où l'on attend . . .

is a perfect example of the process. In other words, the circular tour of the modern world is also a circular tour of the inner world:

—Mon âme est un tombeau que, mauvais cénobite,
Depuis l'éternité *je parcours* et j'habite . . .

III

Baudelaire's relations with the Romantic Movement are scarcely less important than his relations with the great classic writers. The danger of classicism is that poetic method hardens into a convention. It is no longer adequate to living experience because it leaves out too much and literature lags behind life. The order of the seventeenth-century writers was a true order, but life is never static and in literature no order can ever be the final order. Poetic method has to be adapted to the new forms of experience which are evolved as civilization develops.

In some lines was the realization that certain conventions must be overthrown and poetry brought back into contact with life. In writers like Hugo and Musset, however, this feeling was a vague aspiration and no more, and it was left to Baudelaire to give it point and direction. He steered a middle course between the extremes of classicism and romanticism. He did not try to throw over the whole classic heritage as the Romantics had done; he took what was valuable in both methods and transformed it into something new.

When, in some lines which are a good description of his own method, he spoke of *esclaves nus*

. . . dont l'unique soin était d'approfondir
Le secret douloureux qui me faisait languir

the *secret douloureux* looks suspiciously like the romantic malaise but is not. The romantic malaise was vague, adolescent, an illusion which depended in the last resort upon failure to analyse the mood and resolve it into its component parts. The *secret douloureux* of this poem, like the *mal inconnu* of another, is neither vague nor immature. It is capable of exact—sometimes of uncomfortably exact—definition:

Tu rappelles ces jours blancs, tièdes et voilés,
Qui font se fondre en pleurs les cœurs ensorcelés,
Quand, agités d'un mal inconnu qui les tord,
Les nerfs trop éveillés raillent l'esprit qui dort.

The drama of the exhausted mind, unable to grapple with its problems, and the shattered nerves which leave it no rest, echoes and re-echoes through the poetry of the later nineteenth century and reappears in the work of contemporary masters who have been influenced by Baudelaire and his school.

We must not be misled, therefore, by Baudelaire's borrowings from the Romantics. His poetry is the supreme example of the way in which a great poet uses the *contemporary* language to express fresh feelings and perceptions. When he speaks of

. . . les vagues terreurs de ces affreuses nuits
Qui compriment le cœur *comme un papier qu'on froisse*

he not only gives point to the *vagues terreurs* by the homely image of the crumpling paper; he succeeds in transmuting impalpable fears into physical sensation.¹

These extracts help us to understand one of Baudelaire's principal contributions to poetry. He succeeded in exploring the whole of the mind as no other poet had explored it and integrating his findings in poetry. In the hands of Baudelaire and his school poetic method was turned into an instrument of incom-

¹ As another instance of the effect achieved by the conjunction of what Baudelaire called 'contrary' words, compare:

'Ta *mémoire*, pareille aux fables incertaines,
Fatigue le lecteur *ainsi qu'un tympanon*.'

parable delicacy which was capable of penetrating into the farthest recesses of the mind and registering not only changes of mood, but the complex shift and play of feeling within the dominant mood.

His aim in some of the finest of his poems is the *total* analysis of states of mind which are variously described as *spleen*, *ennui*, *tristesse* and *mal*. When we compare his

L'*ennui*, fruit de la morne incuriosité

with Racine's

Dans l'Orient désert quel devint mon *ennui*

it may seem that his method does not differ materially from that of Racine and a number of other French masters. It is true that he possessed Racine's power of translating obscure perceptions into language which has something of the precision of a mathematical formula and that his basic material is the same. This material had, however, been modified by changes which had taken place in civilization. New feelings had emerged; old feelings had broken up and formed fresh combinations like the pieces in a kaleidoscope.

Racine limited his analysis to the great primary emotions: love, hate, fear, jealousy, anger and revenge. Baudelaire analysed not only the great primary emotions, but also many subsidiary feelings and sensations contained in them. This accounts for a difference in method. The line from *Bérénice*, which defines Antiochus' *ennui*, is not unlike part of a geometrical proposition. Antiochus has been disappointed in love: therefore he goes into exile: therefore he feels *ennui*. In seven words we are given an incomparable picture of the East with its vast empty spaces and huge vistas of desolation open before us. We know exactly how Antiochus felt and why he felt as he did. There is nothing to add.

Racine's method is one of compression, Baudelaire's one of amplification. In Racine feelings and language are stripped to their bare essentials: in Baudelaire we find the same accumulation of sense-perceptions as in English poetry, the same marshalling of concrete objects and the same use of suggestion. His line comes from a poem called *Spleen*. It is worth noticing that *Spleen et Idéal* is the title of the first section of the *Fleurs du mal*, that *Spleen de Paris* is an alternative title of the *Petits Poèmes en Prose*, and that there

are in all four poems called *Spleen*. In Racine's poetry the great primary emotions are at bottom the same: the plays are variations on a theme and the variations are mainly due to different characters and situations. Baudelaire uses the word *spleen* to describe a variety of moods; but though they have certain common characteristics their component parts are by no means identical.

In this poem *ennui* is merely one term in the definition of *spleen*. It does not spring from a clear-cut *situation* as in *Bérénice*: it proceeds from another *feeling*, from *morne incuriosité*. This brings us to a further difference. Racine extracts only those elements from a situation which are strictly necessary for his purpose; but Baudelaire extracts one feeling from another feeling without limit and he sometimes pushes analysis to the point at which the feeling is destroyed. In another poem he writes of

Une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui

and the line illustrates very well the process of extracting one feeling from another like a series of Chinese boxes.

The reasons for these differences are not difficult to discover. Racine lived in an age of transition, but he still lived in a clearly *definable* world. In the nineteenth century the whole basis of the spiritual and emotional life of the race was undergoing revolutionary changes, and it was the task of the poet to give an ordered presentation of new feelings at the moment of their formation.

The problem that confronted Baudelaire has been well described in a poem where he speaks of

De vastes voluptés, changeantes, inconnues,
Et dont l'esprit humain n'a jamais su le nom!

The problem was to create a new language, to find names for the nameless feelings that were emerging from revolutionary changes taking place in civilization. His words also help us to understand the difficulties that his poetry presents for the reader. When you read him for the first time as a young man, you may think that he is simply a very skilful erotic poet and wonder whether his poetry, enjoyable as it certainly is, is really worth all the fuss that has been made about it. This difficulty persists, but as your knowledge increases it assumes a different form. It is still possible after years of study to feel doubtful whether very much has been said in some of the poems, whether there is anything particularly profound in

Et rien, ni votre amour, ni le boudoir, ni l'âtre,
Ne me vaut le soleil rayonnant sur la mer.

It is even possible to mistake the lines

La glace qui les mord, les soleils qui les cuivrent,
Effacent lentement la marque des baisers

for mere sophistication and to miss the wealth of experience behind them. Baudelaire succeeded magnificently in his task, but it would be idle to pretend that success was invariable and failure uncommon. No one who reads him carefully fails to notice his specialized vocabulary or the frequency with which certain sets of words recur. It will, I think, be possible to show that words expressing negative states like *ennui*, *spleen* and *chagrin* have greater precision and a greater degree of reality than words intended to express positive states like *volupté*, *luxue* and *langueur*. He managed to invest words with a special aura. This makes the sort of exegesis that the literary critic can apply to other great poets extremely difficult in his case and it is sometimes practically impossible to say what a poem is 'about'.

We have already seen that the starting point of Baudelaire's experience is a sense of physical constriction in unnatural surroundings. His reactions to this situation are extremely varied. Sometimes his one desire is to escape from his metal world into a world of fantasy, and there is a very seductive vein of spiritual defeatism running through his poetry:

Dis-moi, ton cœur, parfois, s'envole-t-il, Agathe,
Loin du noir océan de l'immonde cité,
Vers un autre océan où la splendeur éclate,
Bleu, clair, profond, ainsi que la virginité?
Dis-moi, ton cœur, parfois, s'envole-t-il, Agathe?

It is significant that in this poem the voyage does not take him to a new world, but back to his childhood's days, freeing him for a moment from the anxieties and responsibilities and, above all, from the sense of guilt of manhood.

At other times he seems to believe that some superior reality is concealed behind the world of sensible appearances, anticipating Rimbaud's theory of the 'Voyant':

Derrière les ennuis et les vastes chagrins
 Qui chargent de leur poids l'existence brumeuse,
 Heureux celui qui peut d'une aile vigoureuse
 S'élancer vers les champs lumineux et sereins!

The *ennuis* and the *vastes chagrins* are the reality here. The *Heureux celui qui peut . . .* implies that the poet has no hope of making the vigorous effort that he knows is needed. When he tries to describe the vision he falters at once. Any doubts that we may have had over the *splendeur* in *Moesta et errabunda* is confirmed by the vagueness of the *champs lumineux et sereins*. Baudelaire anticipates Rimbaud's weaknesses as well as his theories.

Baudelaire realized that any improvement in man's situation could only come through individual effort¹ and the moralist is evident in the remarkable line:

O toi, tous mes *plaisirs*! ô toi, tous mes *devoirs*!

where the *devoirs* exclude a hedonist solution. The moral effort needed is reflected in another poem where the 'desires' are compared to the slow, laborious movement of a caravan:

Quand vers toi mes *désirs* partent en caravane,
 Tes yeux sont la citerne où boivent mes ennuis.

Baudelaire regarded art and sexual love as the means of resisting the disintegrating forces of his time, and Eliot has spoken of 'the reaching out [in his poetry] towards something which cannot be had *in*, but which may be had partly *through* personal relations.'² It is found, for example, in *La Chevelure*:

Un port retentissant où mon âme peut boire
 A grands flots le parfum, le son et la couleur;
 Où les vaisseaux, glissant dans l'or et dans la moire,
 Ouvrent leurs vastes bras pour embrasser la gloire
 D'un ciel pur où frémit l'éternelle chaleur.

It must be said at once that these lines are among the most beautiful that Baudelaire ever wrote, but they are also a perfect illustration of the difficulties referred to earlier. The success of

¹ 'Il ne peut y avoir de progrès (vrai, c'est-à-dire moral) que dans l'individu et par l'individu lui-même.' (*Mon cœur mis à nu*.)

² *Selected Essays*, p. 376.

the poem as a whole lies in its peculiar atmosphere, in the rich, voluptuous sense of mature love that it manages to convey. At the same time we cannot help recalling, a little uneasily, Laforgue's penetrating comment that in Baudelaire the verse *enchasuble* the subject.¹ For when we look into it, we see that this is an attempt to describe 'the Good Life'; but though it is a superb description of the poet's feelings on attaining his vision, the vision itself eludes him. His conception of 'the Good Life' seems to be no more than a riot of sound, scent and colour. The words are immensely suggestive—indeed they suggest far too much—but they seem to be without positive content either because the poet has no real conception of 'the Good Life' or because the words are incapable of expressing the reality. Nor are we reassured when in the next verse we come across

Et mon esprit subtil que le rousin caresse
Saura vous retrouver, ô féconde paresse!
Infinis bercements du loisir embaumé!

For it is legitimate to ask whether the *esprit subtil* is being put to a proper use. The linking of *subtil* and *paresse* is characteristic of Baudelaire's habit of linking words which express sharp, precise sensations or sensations of extreme vitality and words which blunt their sharpness or undermine their vitality.

The more we read the *Fleurs du mal*, the more apparent it becomes that while Baudelaire is a magnificent analyst of the sensations of disintegration and collapse, he fails to describe convincingly the positive goal towards which he is struggling. When he tries to define the crucial word *extase* he can produce nothing more lucid than

O métamorphose mystique
De tous mes sens fondus en un

which is the fruit of the dubious psychology of the *Correspondances*. And in the celebrated lines

Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté.

I have never felt that the word *ordre* has the positive force that Eliot ascribes to it in his essay on 'Baudelaire in Our Time'.

¹ *Mélanges posthumes*, Paris, 1903, p. 115.

There is always a contrast between imagined beatitude and comfortless actuality, and the heart of Baudelaire's experience is an interior desolation. So in the splendid

Le Printemps adorable a perdu son odeur!

there is a passionate desire for a new life behind the *Printemps adorable* which can never be realized. In another poem he writes:

Un soleil sans chaleur plane au-dessus six mois,
Et les six autres mois la nuit couvre la terre.

Again:

Voilà que j'ai touché l'automne des idées,
Et qu'il faut employer la pelle et les râteaux
Pour rassembler à neuf les terres inondées,
Où l'eau creuse des trous grands comme des tombeaux.

The life-giving water turns into a flood which destroys instead of irrigating. His constant preoccupation is with the *vécu*, and the burden of his song is that life is finished:

—Quand notre cœur a fait une fois sa vendange,
Vivre est un mal!

There are some passages in the diaries which throw a good deal of light on this sense of failure:

'L'amour, c'est le goût de la prostitution. Il n'est même pas de plaisir noble qui ne puisse être ramené à la prostitution. Dans un spectacle, dans un bal, chacun jouit de tous.

'Qu'est-ce que l'art? Prostitution.'

'Qu'est-ce que l'amour? Le besoin de sortir de soi. L'homme est un animal adorateur. Adorer, c'est se sacrifier et se prostituer. Aussi tout amour est-il prostitution. . . . Goût inamovible de la prostitution dans le cœur de l'homme, d'où naît son horreur de la solitude.—Il veut être *deux*. L'homme de génie veut être *un*, donc solitaire. La gloire, c'est rester *un*, et se prostituer d'une manière particulière.'

The vital word is *prostituer*. It is not only the man of genius but every civilized man who wants to feel himself 'one' in a civilisation that is perpetually undermining the unity of the individual

life. 'L'art', wrote Baudelaire in another passage, 'est un agent civilisateur'. The tragedy was that in practice art and love, which should have been the means of preserving human integrity, were both forms of 'prostitution' and failed to prevent the waste of the sovereign gifts of intelligence and imagination. The poet's desire to preserve civilized values is doomed to frustration. In a hostile world he remains, ironically, *riche, mais impuissant*.

It is fashionable to treat Baudelaire's diaries as *bêtises* or, at best, as case-books for the psychologist. Nothing could be more mistaken. They contain some of his profoundest comments on civilization. The dilemma, which is described in theoretical terms in the passages given above, is strikingly illustrated in the practical sphere by the letter to Madame Sabatier of 31st August, 1857, written apparently the day after the breakdown of the Platonic make-believe:

'Et enfin, enfin, il y a quelques jours, tu étais une divinité, ce qui est si commode, ce qui est si beau, si inviolable. Te voilà femme, maintenant. . . . Enfin, arrive ce que pourra. Je suis un peu fataliste. Mais ce que je sais bien, c'est que j'ai horreur de la passion—parce que je la connais, avec toutes ses ignominies. . . .¹

These are strange words, but they illustrate very well Baudelaire's radical incompatibility for life as it was in the nineteenth century, and this incompatibility is everywhere apparent in the poetry. In

Une nuit que j'étais près d'une affreuse Juive,
Comme au long d'un cadavre, un cadavre étendu

the hollow thud of the repeated *cadavre* emphasises the connection between passion and death, and in the characteristic

—O fureur des cœurs mûrs par l'amour ulcérés!

we are reminded that in the last analysis passion, instead of being a means of life, is essentially destructive.

Hence the conclusion:

Que bâtir sur les cœurs est une chose sotte;
Que tout craque, amour et beauté . . .

Baudelaire's poetry abounds in descriptions of the final collapse and ruin of the individual:

¹ *Lettres 1841-1866*, pp. 138-9.

'Mon *esprit* est pareil à la tour qui succombe
Sous les coups du bélier infatigable et lourd.'

'Et le riche métal de notre *volonté*
Est tout vaporisé par ce savant chimiste' (Satan)

'Mon *cœur* est un palais flétri par la cohue.'

'Vainement ma *raison* voulait prendre la barre;
La tempête en jouant déroutait ses efforts,
Et mon *âme* dansait, dansait, vieille gabarre
Sans mâts, sur une mer monstrueuse et sans bords!'

These lines are a masterly expression of the destructive forces that attack the individual. The admirable precision of the language brings home to us the general paralysis that creeps over man, infecting the 'heart' (for Baudelaire the seat of the affections), rotting the 'will', corroding the 'mind', rendering 'reason' impotent and finally reducing the whole man (this is the sense of *âme*) to a state of helplessness, drifting on the stormy shoreless ocean where he finally disintegrates like an old ship.

One of the tragedies of the contemporary world is that the intellect, instead of introducing order, contributes to the general collapse. The last word on the destructive role of the intellect is to be found, a little surprisingly, in Baudelaire's early autobiographical story, *La Fanfarlo*:

'Nous nous sommes tellement appliqués à sophistiquer notre cœur, nous avons tant abusé du microscope pour étudier les hideuses excroissances et les honteuses verrues dont il est couvert, et que nous grossissons à plaisir, qu'il est impossible que nous parlions le langage des autres hommes. Ils vivent pour vivre, et nous, hélas! nous vivons pour savoir. Tout le mystère est là. L'âge ne change que la voix et n'abolit que les cheveux et les dents; nous avons altéré l'accent de la nature, nous avons extirpé une à une les pudeurs virginales dont était hérissé notre intérieur d'honnête homme. Nous avons psychologisé comme les fous, qui augmentent leur folie en s'efforçant de la comprendre. Les années n'infirmement que les membres, et nous avons déformé les passions.'

IV

I have dwelt on Baudelaire's spiritual defeatism and on what seem to me to be his failures, but I do not wish to give the

impression that his attitude was predominantly defeatist or that his failures, significant as they certainly are, lessen the value of his work as a whole. His attitude is not consistent in the sense that the classic writer's is. His purpose—it is this that distinguishes him from any of his predecessors—was not to examine experience from a fixed, unchanging standpoint or to demonstrate the excellence of one particular attitude. It was to explore all the different possible attitudes that were open to the contemporary man.

It has been said of him that he gave expression to something that was diffused in the air about him. The measure of his success is paradoxically the completeness, the finality of his picture. No problem, no aspect of modern urban civilization, seems to have eluded him. The great city is there with its bustle and industrialism, its palaces and its slums, its stuffy middle-class apartments filled with ugly but expensive furniture and artificial flowers.

His mingling of classical diction with conversational style, archaic words with modern colloquialisms, enabled him to reveal human nature to itself in a new way. For the man whose feelings are analysed is no rootless intellectual. He is a cultured European who is fully aware of his great heritage and the dangers to which it is exposed. The continuity of his work with the work of the great writers of the past is absolute. Every line, every word, has behind it layers and layers of civilized human experience, and this gives his poetry its richness and maturity and its strange resonance. He is unrivalled in his knowledge of the human heart; every kind and degree of sexual passion seems to be known to him as he moves from an extreme simplicity to an extreme sophistication in a way that was entirely beyond the range of the poets of the past. The experiences that he records are not something that happened to an isolated individual: they are something that happened to human nature at a particular stage in its development, and it is for this reason that his single volume of poetry has modified the sensibility of generations of sensitive readers.

Although Baudelaire increased the potentialities of human experience, he was in no sense a writer who indulged in a cult of unrelated feelings for their own sake. He was, no doubt, the great laureate of a collapsing civilization, but his work bears the impress of a powerful personality. No other nineteenth-century writer saw through the popular slogans of the day and the religion of progress more completely than he. But though the

Fleurs du mal is a tremendous indictment of a corrupt society, Baudelaire was in no way a reformer; he had no 'policy' and nothing of the crusading spirit. His insistence on original sin shows that he did not try, like later reformers, to evade responsibility by attributing man's ills to economic factors or believe that they could be cured by some facile economic reshuffle. He realized that the problems were spiritual, but his work was to present the problems, not to find solutions. Later in the century Lautréamont proclaimed that 'La poésie doit avoir pour but la vérité pratique,' and Rimbaud's reforming zeal drove him out of poetry altogether. Such views were entirely alien to Baudelaire's nature. His poetry always halts at the point where it seems about to merge into theology, and his 'tour' ends on a mark of interrogation. It was because he was so completely an artist, so disdainful of the view that poetry should inculcate a moral, that he remains after all the greatest European poet of the century.

AUGUSTUS JOHN

FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—IV

JOHN SAMPSON could turn a phrase better than most. If his manner verged on the pompous it was only in keeping with his physique, which was big and portly. Besides *Romani* he cultivated the mysterious jargon of the Tinkers, known as *Shelta*, and had mastered both *Back* and *Rhyming* slang. In later years he added Sanskrit to his stock. His measured speech combined with an insolent display of superior knowledge and a jeering style of humour served him usefully with strangers who were quickly reduced to that condition of discomfort which he aimed at. He thus was enabled to conceal from the world his own shrinking and extremely vulnerable sensibility. His translations from Heine, FitzGerald, etc., into his beloved *Romani* are perfect in their kind and his edition of William Blake remains a monument of accurate and well-inspired scholarship. He admitted but few friends in his life, the chief being Walter Raleigh and Robert Bridges. The fact that the *Rai* was nearly twice my age helped to save our relationship

from such dangers as menaced it from his perverse temper and my quick one. If we sometimes quarrelled, sooner or later we always made it up. Our visits to Cabbage Hall and other places where gypsies gathered were rich in incident. Cabbage Hall in reality was a patch of waste land upon which the Boswells were accustomed to encamp during the winter. Here I became familiar with people bearing such names as Noah, Kenza, Eros, Bohemia, Sinfai, Athaliah, Counseletta, Alabaina, Tihanna, Simpronius, Queenation, Saiforella, etc. The *Chais*, or young women, elegant and provocative, led one into a region of pitfalls where sentiment was countered by an oblique and derisory intelligence. With a good ear and endless curiosity, I soon became proficient in English Romani and may even have been guilty at times of the ineptitude of trying to teach gypsies their own language; but it was not till I visited the village of Bettwys-gwerfil-goch that I made a direct acquaintance with the complexities of the Welsh dialect as recorded by Sampson in the learned pages of *The Gypsy Lore Journal* and preserved by the tri-lingual family of the Woods. Among these gypsies were some excellent harpists and all seemed to fiddle as a matter of course. As the Welsh can always be depended upon for a song, our gatherings in the wayside inns were entertaining and instructive, Sampson being on the *qui vive* for any rare word or locution, while the Gypsies vied with each other in sounding the depths of the *Purikano cib* or ancient tongue.

Liverpool, which I believe is commonly considered a somewhat dull commercial city, for me abounded in interest and surprise. I explored appreciatively the sombre district on the Mersey side, populated largely by migrant Scandinavians; the *Goree Piazza* faintly reeking of the Slave Trade, where perhaps a few be-ringed and superannuated buccaneers might still be found day-dreaming over their rum; in the Chinese quarter attempted and failed to achieve the *Kif* in the company of dishevelled and muttering addicts of The Laughing God; not without trepidation I penetrated into the lodging-houses of the tinkers off the Scotland road, where a rough and outlandish society assembled round the communal fire in a mood of precarious good-fellowship.

My contacts with the university people were not pushed to extremes, but I knew well (and painted) John McDonald Mackay, Oliver Elton and Kuno Meyer and when Walter Raleigh, then at Oxford, revisited his old friends I was staggered by the cool

brilliance of his mind. He shone even at breakfast. Another visitor from Oxford, York Powell, I found a most congenial character. Charles Bonnier, who was more interested in the theory and practice of *pointillisme* than in his academic duties was also a personage carrying a suggestion of Parisian modernism into the frowzy atmosphere of Brownlow Hill.

C. H. Reilly, when he arrived to occupy the chair of Architecture with signal success, and out of a superabundance of energy and good will founded the Liverpool Repertory Theatre, was a valuable acquisition whom later on I painted. Scott Macfie, an eccentric gypsy scholar, when on friendly terms with Sampson, would join us in our adventures.

Perhaps the most important of my Liverpool portraits was that of the Lord Mayor, Chaloner Dowdall. This when exhibited proved a nine-days wonder and a riot with the possible destruction of the work, was only averted by the prompt action of the police. I have never understood why my innocent picture aroused the fury of the Liverpudlians, though I was told that the fact that I had included the Lord Mayor's Sword-bearer in the composition (without extra charge) had something to do with it. Dowdall defended me loyally, and I am glad to say found his reward later, when, being in need of cash, he sold his picture very profitably and bought himself a country house. The picture changed hands several times, always at an enhanced price, and was lately acquired by an Australian Art Gallery.

Hearing that Esmeralda Groome (*née* Boswell) was encamped on the Wirral, we paid a visit to this famous gypsy. An agreeable and lively woman, she still retained traces of that beauty which had inflamed Hubert Smith and Frances Hindes Groome (and maybe others). Upon leaving she presented me with *Rhoda Boswell's Courtship*, a book of poems, interlarded with gypsy words, by Theodore Watts-Dunton which the author had given her. Writing her name on the back page she remarked '*Sor dinveriben, Raia*' (it's all nonsense, sir). Sampson and I subsequently called at the Pines, Putney, and were received by Watts-Dunton who, much to my disappointment, refused to produce Swinburne: it appeared he was upstairs and not feeling well. Watts-Dunton had had something to do with gypsies, but already hard of hearing, we found on addressing him in Romany, that his deafness became insuperable. Growing at last tired of

Sampson's company, I abandoned him in the Euston Road while he was having his boots polished, and made my way home to Matching Green, Essex, with his voice, by some curious hallucination, croaking in my ear all the way. Like making a new friend, to break with an old one, even at some physical discomfort, is one of the major intellectual satisfactions within one's reach. I now decided to take to the road, at any rate for a spell. My caravan, fetched from Dartmoor, now rested at Effingham. I obtained a second van, a light cart and a few horses, including an old black hunter upon which I sometimes rode ahead to select a stopping-place. I engaged a young man as groom. With Dorelia, her sister and a little band of children we set forth and, skirting London, made for Cambridge where I had some work to do. One evening, the horses being tired, I halted the procession at a wayside Inn near Watford, and inquired of the landlord if we could get a pull-in for the night. With great civility we were told that the yard was already full, but that a mile further on I would find ample accommodation in the forecourt of another Inn. Riding on, therefore, I put my case before the second publican who agreed to take us. When, however, I returned with the rest of the company, this man rushed out in a state of violent agitation, and making the extraordinary statement that 'he had thought we was *Pantehnicos*' swore that he wouldn't have our class of people at any price. There was nothing for it but to go back and throw ourselves on the mercy of our first acquaintance. He proved the best of hosts, made room for us in his yard and entertained us for a week. This good fellow was a natural buffoon and every evening dressed up in absurd clothes for the amusement of his clients. At Cambridge, we encamped in a field by the Cam, and I would drive in every day to Newnham College to paint Jane Harrison. This famous Greek scholar was an invalid, and I portrayed the wonderful woman reclining on her couch, while she smoked cigarettes and chatted learnedly with Gilbert Murray. Murray, with Rupert Brooke, visited us now and then at the camp, both very charming, good-natured and playful with the children. Rupert Brooke was distinguished by a blond and healthy style of beauty of which he was naturally not unconscious. Beyond a visit to James Strachey at Kings' I saw little of University life. Some of the undergraduates boating past our camp, displaying a lack of good taste, incurred the anger of Dorelia, and

were duly castigated by her. My ill-selected groom on one occasion, meeting me with the trap, and in a pugnacious mood, it fell to me to correct him, and I drove him back considerably the worse for the encounter. From Cambridge we trekked to Norwich where I left the family encamped on a piece of waste ground, while I proceeded to Liverpool to paint the Lord Mayor. This task accomplished, I returned and harnessing up, once more we moved on, this time towards the coast. As I rode ahead my poor black horse stumbled and fell. I walked him into the village of Palling, stabled him and treated him as best we could, but, injured internally, we were unable to save his life. Here I dismissed my useless groom. After a stay at Palling we moved northwards to pull in at last at my friend Charles Slade's home. On the way I lost another horse, weakened through Arthur, the groom's, neglect. A gypsy gave me a pound for the carcass. I now received a letter from a New York lawyer, John Quinn, asking me to paint his portrait while on a visit to London. This decided me to return to 153 Church Street, Chelsea, and our wanderings were at an end for a while.

John Quinn turned out to be a pleasant, jocular and open-handed Irish-American. We became very friendly, and later on I shall have a good deal to recount of our relations, for he returned to Europe subsequently, and we visited France together on more than one occasion..

Removing to Paris we occupied varying quarters on and off for a year or two before returning to England after the loss of my sweet wife. At Paris I knew but few artists. Rodin's acquaintance I made, however, through the mediation of Will Rothenstein. Together we visited the Master at Meudon, and at his studios, Rue de l'Université. I called on Anquetin, of whom Conder used frequently to talk with vast admiration, and I found this burly fellow at the summit of his 'Rubens' phase of development. He had for the fifth time discovered 'the only way' to paint and was surrounded by superb and voluptuous nudes glazed with bistre upon a monochrome of black and white. Upon leaving he invited me to come and work with him '*et nous en ferons des choses!*' Sometimes I have regretted that I never returned. Under his robust leadership, I would have acquired the *grand métier* and within its salutary limitations, perhaps have become infinitely productive.

My chief friend at this time was a Frenchman, Maurice Cremnitz, an obscure *employé* during the day; in the evenings he emerged from his mysterious bureau and became what Barbey d'Aurevilly might have called (cryptically) *un Cyclop du Pavé* (he made no pretensions to Barbey's *Dandyisme*). His profound knowledge of the lower parts of Paris, his witty and sometimes scaring tongue (which his friends had reason to be afraid of) and his genial and well-informed mind made him an enchanting companion. A member of the *Cercle* of the *Closerie des Lilas*, presided over by Jean Moreas, he introduced me to this assemblage of literary folk, Paul Fort, Guillaume Apollinaire, André Salmon, Adolphe Retté and many others were to be found here of Wednesday evening, and though a complete outsider, I enjoyed the hubbub. Moreas, with his top hat and monocle, presented a fierce and arrogant mask to the world. The organ of this society *Vers et Prose* was ably conducted by Paul Fort's brother Robert. By the device of printing periodically the names of all subscribers he insured the journal's success and them a modicum of literary distinction. Numerous Belgians took advantage of this and their *snobisme* kept the magazine going. After the *Cercle* broke up at a late hour, Cremnitz, the 'Prince des Poètes', and I would sometimes roam Paris visiting those wine shops where the *vin blanc* was both good and cheap, now and then at some risk descending into the *Caveau des Innocents* in the neighbourhood of *The Halles*, resort of *apaches*, *maquereaux* and their *mômes*. My French companions with reason aware of the hazards we ran in such a society, were inclined to be self-conscious and on their guard, but I, with no sense of danger, found myself very much at home in this Villonesque atmosphere.

One morning when Cremnitz had been discoursing on the beauties of *Gothic*, insisting on its essentially *classic* quality of *symmetry*, I mentioned with some diffidence that Notre Dame at least was far from symmetrical. He accepted my challenge and descending from the heights of Montmartre, we viewed the Cathedral from the Pont du Louvre, where he was forced to admit the correctness of my observation which had detected some two-thirds difference in bulk between the twin towers. Cremnitz brought to my studio a rather silent young man called Picasso. Although his name presented difficulties, it was beginning to be mentioned as belonging to a Spanish painter of interest.

Having examined my drawings attentively he left, inviting me to visit his studio in Montmartre. This a few days later I did and was immediately struck by his powers. At this time he was engaged on an immense canvas containing a number of figures based, it would seem, on a recent acquaintance with the monstrous images of Easter Island, but he showed me other works which displayed an almost equal sympathy with the traditions of less remote cultural sources, including even some of his own continent. With astonishing virtuosity this restless spirit seizes upon, in turn, every manifestation of Art providing the kind of material he needs with which to juggle and incidentally stimulate the appetite of a public avid for novelty and mystification. Anything but primitive himself, he has found in Primitive Art a means of escape from the boredom which overcomes the sophisticated in the face of objective nature. By an acrobatic sense of style he converts such motifs to his own uses with the surprising results we know and often admire. A psychologist rather than a decorator, this Mediterranean hybrid brings to light from mysterious depths those elements of drama upon which his genius feeds, and for which he invents a symbolism derived maybe from the visible world, but discoloured and transformed under his hand as if by the operation of a drug into some nameless arabesque.

The genial grandeur of Daumier's imagination seems to have induced in Picasso a reaction of dubious sentimentality. The Saltimbanque has been undermined with phthisis, the emaciated old mendicant plucks one last sad chord from his guitar; the hydrocephalous boy gazes blankly out on a blue world; the pseudo-classic woman attends abstractedly to her unlikely brood. . . .

In another and later mood the artist under the compulsion of his dæmon imagines unheard of formulæ by means of which what would appear to be voluptuous the torments of the unconscious are resumed in a series of flamboyant, obscene, and highly-convoluted simulacra.

Gazing amazedly one day and for the first time at some pictures by the *Douanier Rousseau*, a stranger came up to me and enquired innocently *est-ce que c'est fait exprès?* A very searching question, and in my opinion the answer is 'No', for the Douanier could not have done otherwise than he did, but I am aware certain critics have disputed his elaborate *naïveté* as they would, I suppose, the evidence of their senses.

A summer spent at Equihen, near Boulogne, was pleasant and profitable. I have always been partial to fisher-folk, and the people of Equihen and Le Portel, in their distinctive costume, were excellent models. These blonde women and girls, of, it would appear, a separate race must, in the eighteenth century, have been still more vivid, but Sir Joshua Reynolds, who visited the place, apparently noticed nothing, for in his diary he makes no mention of them. With the world's universal trend towards a characterless uniformity the Boulogne *matelotes* have lost their magnificent head-dresses, which are preserved only in a few old photographs. In England the leading eighteenth-century painters being entirely urban and subservient to the exigencies of rank and fashion, had no eye or perhaps no time for the regional life of their day, and the nineteenth century saw the last remnants of popular cultural traditions perish under the frown of an ignorant, sanctimonious and parvenu *bourgeoisie* which, elevated upon the principles of self-help, child torture and mass enslavement had with the support of the Church obtained ascendancy in the social life of England. It was at Equihen that I witnessed a curious and I think a unique occurrence. Returning one evening from a walk upon the sands which stretch westwards in the direction of Etaples, I observed the sun to set opposite me, that is to say, in the east. No one else appeared to have noticed this phenomenon, but I cannot see how I could have been mistaken. Apart from its eccentric behaviour the sunset itself was in no way remarkable.

Life in Paris at this time was of a simpler order, the tempo slower than to-day. If being in a hurry one took a *fiacre* to be drawn gently along by an exhausted horse, under the guidance of its disillusioned *cocher*, one only arrived a little late for one's appointment. Sitting at the *café* I wondered who could those grave long-bearded young men be, who passed carrying portfolios, and what did these contain? And the foreigners who mused for hours over a cup of cold coffee, what could they be thinking of? The waiters would attend with indifference to the too frequent orders of hilarious tourists who seemed to think they had arrived at a city given up entirely to debauchery, though no signs of it met the eye. At those places of entertainment where pornography was staged and organized on a business basis with *Les Quadrilles* performed by sullen *Filles* I found the public exhibition of the *Dessous* only caused me embarrassment with a distaste for my

fellows and a rising tendency towards Virginolatry. Paris, the worst place to be idle, the best place to work in, offers for recreation in the evenings the endless processional of the Grands Boulevards. I could never accustom myself to the teeming pandemonium of the streets. On the terraces of the *Nouvelle Athènes* or the *Rat Mort* I seemed to see the ghosts of the last enchanted epoch. The elegant silhouette of Manet, the noble figurehead of Pissarro, the wise and childlike countenance of Renoir, the uncouth scowl of Cezanne, the formidable correctitude of Degas. The little Place du Tertre had not then been converted into a bad open-air restaurant with sham artists in velvet parading their portfolios and meretricious female students their covert charms under the specious excuse of a few abominable drawings. The Café des Assassins over the *Butte* was still tenanted by genuine homicides, the Moulin de la Galette revolved to the old familiar tune: the Bal Tabarin had not been corrupted by foreign gold. Jazz was unknown and the ululation of the crooner unheard. Instead such pleasant ditties as 'Caroline', 'Miette', 'Viens poule-poule', and 'La petite Tonkinoise' were popular. Henry Lamb and I used to sit for hours, Rue de la Gaité, enjoying the satanic din of an unusually efficient mechanical orchestra. As artist musician he was able to appreciate fully the qualities of this instrument and unravel its complicated and profoundly ironical symbolism. In place of an ultra-refined 'Announcer', we had Percy Wyndham Lewis to disseminate the news and like an incarnate *Loki* sow dissension with it. Impatient of mental leisureliness or laziness, as it would appear to him, he sought to ginger up his friends, or patients as they might be called, by a policy of indirect and subterranean intervention, provoking them to an activity which was sometimes mischievous by a whisper here, a disturbing suggestion there. Stimulated and troubled as I have often been by Lewis's subtle and imaginative mind, I have never confused painting with politics and have managed to keep myself unidentified with any particular camp. When Marinetti conducted his lightning campaign in London, unlike Lewis, I remained unmoved. It seemed to me clear that there could be no future, as there was no past, for 'Futurism'. As regards religion, too, I have preserved a convenient detachment which permits me to enjoy impartially the splendours of the Roman Rite or the unadorned white-wash of a Quaker meeting-house. It is true, at one time, I took

part in a series of discussions having for their object the manufacture of a new religion—Eric Gill's idea appeared to take the shape of a Neo-Nietzschean doctrine of super-humanity under the sign of the Ithyphallus. As for me I favoured the return of the Earth-Goddess in an enclosed waggon, oxen-drawn and attended by white-robed and dancing *choroi*—Jacob Epstein's solution was simpler, consisting merely in the divination of himself, magnified and blowing his own trumpet. For a time I became interested in Auguste Comte and his gospel. But I was unable to hold with a religio-philosophy which based itself on the worship of the great. Such foundations appeared to me insecure. 'Put not your faith in Princes'—no, nor in great men neither! For greatness fluctuates with time and may dwindle under the inverted telescope of Posterity. I knew that I could depend on Will Rothenstein to turn wine into water and that the rest would then follow.

However this may be I didn't catch on to Positivism in spite of the charm of the doctor friend who attempted to convert me, but pursued my way in a state of spiritual irresponsibility. The difficult standards of Art I had set myself to follow claimed all my attention as failure after failure attested. In France, the *Grande Lignée* of painting starting with Jean Fouquet and the *École d'Avignon* and descending via Francois Clouet, Jacques Callot, Louis le Nain, Nicholas Poussin, Claude Lorrain, towards the masters of the eighteenth century, La Tour, Watteau, Fragonard, Chardin, etc., and in the nineteenth Gericault, Delacroix, Daumier, Corot, Ingres, Courbet, till we arrive at the protagonists of so-called 'Impressionism', represented for me the great, the authentic Tradition, to which undismayed by its splendour, I dedicated myself.

Not that I was exclusively attached to the French Branch of the European Tree, for ultimately it is to Italy I would trace my cultural beginnings: names such as Giotto, Duccio, Massacio, Piero della Francesca, Signorelli Piero di Cosimo, Raphael, have for me the refulgence of precious stones set in the diadem of a princely and Apollonian line.



AUGUSTUS JOHN, R.A.: STUDY OF DORELIA. (Collection Lady Bowyer-Smyth)

PETER WATSON

JOAN MIRO

THE painting of Joan Miro is typically Spanish with its vitality, brilliance, gaiety, violence and passionate love of the essentials of life. Born in 1893, in Montroig, near Barcelona, Miro was forced by his father to discontinue his art studies at the École des Beaux-Arts in Barcelona for a business career, but at the age of eighteen he finally left his office for the Gali Academy. At this time he could only draw in flat planes with coloured lines and, in order to teach his pupil form, Professor Gali bound his eyes and made him draw objects by sense of touch only. For the same reason he was also taught pottery and sculpture.

He held his first exhibition in Barcelona in 1918, and came to Paris in 1919, where, befriended by Picasso, he took a room and held a second exhibition. The next few years were spent in more or less acute poverty in Paris, where he occupied the studio of Pablo Gargallo, the Spanish sculptor, adjoining the studio of André Masson. Much of his painting was done suffering the hunger caused by one uncertain meal each day. The apparently light-hearted and gay 'Carneval d'Arlequin' is a composite of hallucinations caused by hunger from details scribbled each night on ends of paper. When not working, Miro was increasingly attracted by the company of the various poets at that time in Paris; having, already in 1923, the conviction that he must go beyond the plastic element in painting in order to reach pure poetry, thus aiming at suggestion rather than description. 'Poetry plastically expressed speaks its own language.' Until this year his work had been chiefly representational, portraits, landscapes and still-lives. In 1924 his friendship with Paul Eluard, Max Ernst and Arp, among the most creative members of the Surrealist movement, was to have a deep and lasting effect on his work. Now, with his developing interest in the raw materials of art, he tried to discover the religious essence of life in the meaning of objects. In order to do this he was more and more attracted by the simplest forms of life. In his pictures people became just *personnages*, interest in animals and trees became interest in

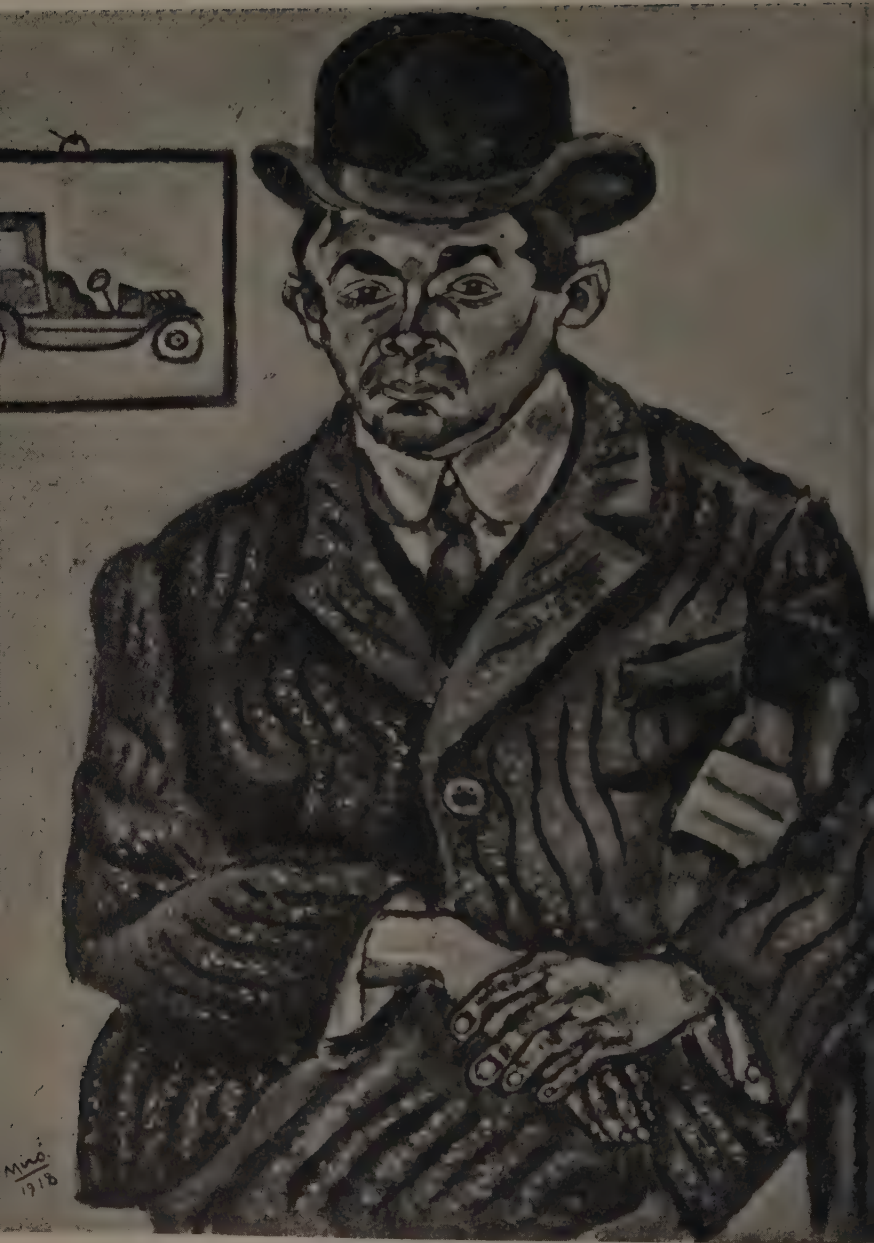
molluscs, dragon-flies, water plants, blades of grass. Gradually the objects detach themselves from their background until they often seem to be floating in an aquarium of space. These pictures, which appear so gay and childlike, represent a prodigious effort by this poet-painter to re-invest some meaning into contemporary life by a direct appeal to the emotions and experiences common to every human being. The rejection of all inessentials demanded a passionate fervour if it was to become creative.

In his own words, 'Courage consists in remaining in one's home, next to nature, which takes no account of our disasters. Each speck of dust contains its own marvellous soul. But, in order to understand it, it is necessary to rediscover the religious and magical element of things, the element expressed by primitive peoples. But one must keep enough purity to be stirred. Lose contact with the people and you are lost. The worst that can possibly happen is for the artist to place himself above the people, to flatter them by giving them shameful clichés. The present official milieux, bastard products of politics, and of the arts, which profess to regenerate the world, are going to poison our last sources of refreshment. While they speak of nobility and tradition, or, on the contrary, of revolution and a proletarian paradise, we can see how their stomachs swell with self-importance and how the fat soaks into their spirit. If only they would not ask us to lower the artist to the level of a society which has such a desperate need of the artist to rediscover its lost dignity. It is equally important not to worry about either criticism or self-criticism. The less we look for success the better we succeed: I mean the greater chance we have of an honest success. A picture, after all, comes from a surplus of emotions and sensations. It is only a process of birth to which one can never return.'

As the present disaster was preparing itself during the 'thirties, Miro was protesting with all the weapons at his command. In 1937 he was commissioned by the Republican Government of Spain to paint a large panel, 'The Reaper', for the Spanish Pavilion in the Paris Exhibition. This panel, showing a Catalan peasant in revolt, comprised, with the Mercury Fountain by Alexander Calder and Picasso's 'Guernica', the interior decoration of the Pavilion. He also designed a poster for display in France, 'Help Spain', under which he wrote, 'In the present struggle I see, on the Fascist side, spent forces; on the opposite side, the people, whose



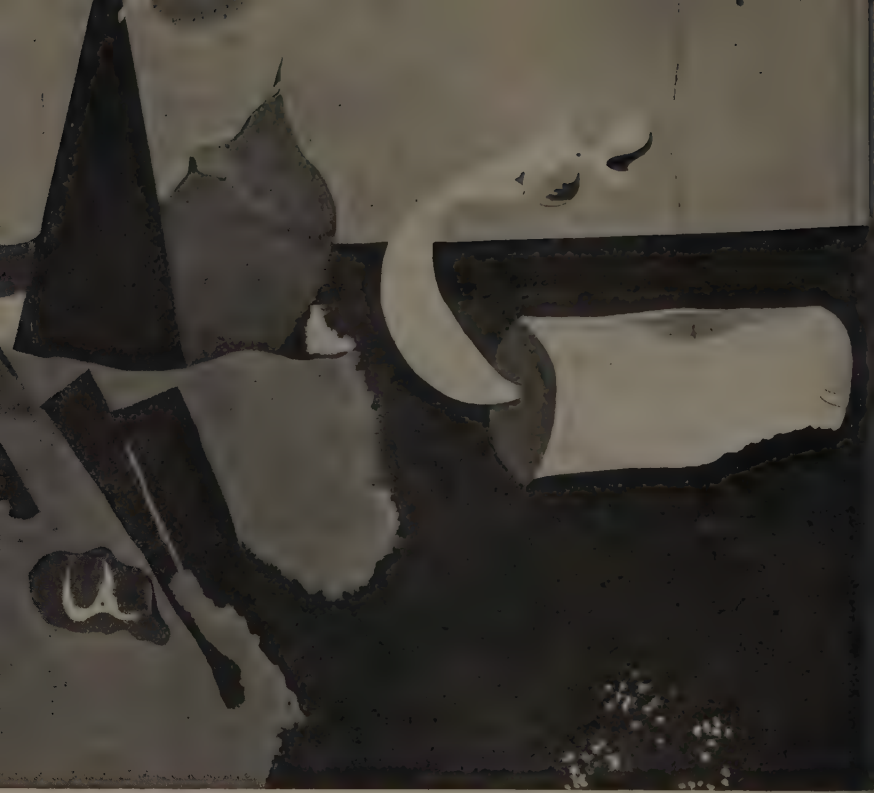
THE FARM (DETAIL) by Joan Miro (Hemingway Collection)



MAN WITH A DERBY, about 1918, by Joan Miro



THE FARM'S KITCHEN, about 1920, by Joan Miro



LANDSCAPE BY THE SEA, 1926, by Joan Miro

boundless creative will give Spain an impetus which will astonish the world.'

In contemporary painting Miro resembles Klee, although by nature he is far less complicated than the German. His work is more homogeneous and does not cover nearly such a diversity of interests, subjects and techniques. For this reason it is purer and more forceful. This direct and simple purity is, as yet, generally unappreciated in England, which has, unfortunately, seen so little of his best work. There is also a streak of anarchism, a will to resist not only whatever form of society tries to impose its standards on him but also all intellectuals who try to compress his work into the limitations of theory.

The last news received directly from a friend of his, Louis Fernandez, a Spanish painter still in Paris, was that he was leaving France last April for the home of his wife's parents in the Balearic Islands.

GEORGE ORWELL

WELLS, HITLER AND THE WORLD STATE

IN March or April, say the wiseacres, there is to be a stupendous knockout blow at Britain. . . . What Hitler has to do it with, I cannot imagine. His ebbing and dispersed military resources are now probably not so very much greater than the Italians' before they were put to the test in Greece and Africa.'

'The German air power has been largely spent. It is behind the times and its first-rate men are mostly dead or disheartened or worn out.'

'In 1914 the Hohenzollern army was the best in the world. Behind that screaming little defective in Berlin there is nothing of the sort. . . . Yet our military "experts" discuss the waiting phantom. In their imaginations it is perfect in its equipment and invincible in discipline. Sometimes it is to strike a decisive blow' through Spain and North Africa and on, or march through the Balkans, march from the Danube to Ankara, to Persia, to

India, or "crush Russia", or "pour over the Brenner into Italy". The weeks pass and the phantom does none of these things—for one excellent reason. It does not exist to that extent. Most of such inadequate guns and munitions as it possessed must have been taken from it and fooled away in Hitler's silly feints to invade Britain. And its raw jerrybuilt discipline is wilting under the creeping realization that the Blitzkrieg is spent, and the war is coming home to roost.'

These quotations are not taken from the *Cavalry Quarterly* but from a series of newspaper articles by Mr. H. G. Wells, written at the beginning of this year and now reprinted in a book entitled *Guide to the New World*. Since they were written the German army has overrun the Balkans and reconquered Cyrenaica, it can march through Turkey or Spain at such time as may suit it, and it has undertaken the invasion of Russia. How that campaign will turn out I do not know, but it is worth noticing that the German general staff, whose opinion is probably worth something, would not have begun it if they had not felt fairly certain of finishing it within three months. So much for the idea that the German army is a bogey, its equipment inadequate, its morale breaking down, etc., etc.

What has Wells to set against the 'screaming little defectives in Berlin'? The usual rigmarole about a World State, plus the Sankey Declaration, which is an attempted definition of fundamental human rights, of anti-totalitarian tendency. Except that he is now especially concerned with federal world control of air-power, it is the same gospel as he has been preaching almost without interruption for the past forty years, always with an air of angry surprise at the human beings who can fail to grasp anything so obvious.

What is the use of saying that we need federal world control of the air? The whole question is how we are to get it. What is the use of pointing out that a World State is desirable? What matters is that not one of the five great military powers would think of submitting to such a thing. All sensible men for decades past have been substantially in agreement with what Mr. Wells says; but then sensible men have no power and, in too many cases, no disposition to sacrifice themselves. Hitler is a criminal lunatic, and Hitler has an army of millions of men, aeroplanes in thousands, tanks in tens of thousands. For his sake a great nation has been

willing to overwork itself for six years and then to fight for two years more, whereas for the commonsense, essentially hedonistic world-view that Mr. Wells puts forward hardly a human creature is willing to shed a pint of blood. Before you can even talk of world reconstruction, or even of peace, you have got to eliminate Hitler, which means bringing into being a dynamic not necessarily the same as that of the Nazis, but probably quite as unacceptable to 'enlightened' and hedonistic people. What has kept England on its feet during the past year? Partly, no doubt, some vague idea about a better future, but chiefly the atavistic emotion of patriotism, the ingrained feeling of the English-speaking peoples that they are superior to foreigners. For the last twenty years the main object of English leftwing intellectuals has been to break this feeling down, and if they had succeeded we might be watching the SS-men patrolling the London streets at this moment. Similarly, why are the Russians fighting like tigers against the German invasion? In part, perhaps, for some half-remembered ideal of Utopian Socialism, but chiefly in defence of the Holy Russia (the 'sacred soil of the Fatherland,' etc., etc.), which Stalin has revived in an only slightly altered form. The energy that actually shapes the world springs from emotions—racial pride, leader-worship, religious belief, love of war—which liberal intellectuals mechanically write off as anachronisms, and which they have usually destroyed so completely in themselves as to have lost all power of action.

The people who say that Hitler is Antichrist or, alternatively, the Holy Ghost are nearer an understanding of the truth than the leftwing intellectuals who for ten dreadful years have kept it up that he is merely a figure out of comic opera, not worth taking seriously. All that this idea really reflects is the sheltered conditions of English life. The Left Book Club was at bottom a product of Scotland Yard, just as the Peace Pledge Union is a product of the navy. One development of the last ten years has been the appearance of the 'political book', a sort of enlarged pamphlet combining history with political criticism, as an important literary form. But the best writers in this line—Trotsky, Rauschnig, Rosenberg, Silone, Borkenau, Koestler and others—have none of them been Englishmen, and nearly all of them have been renegades from one or other extremist party, who have seen totalitarianism at close quarters and known the meaning of exile and

persecution. Only in the English-speaking countries was it fashionable to believe, right up to the outbreak of war, that Hitler was an unimportant lunatic and the German tanks made of cardboard. Mr. Wells, it will be seen from the quotations I have given above, believes something of the kind still. I do not suppose that either the bombs or the German campaign in Greece have altered his opinion. A life-long habit of thought stands between him and an understanding of Hitler's power.

Mr. Wells, like Dickens, belongs to the non-military middle class. The thunder of guns, the jingle of spurs, the catch in the throat when the old flag goes by, leave him manifestly cold. He has an invincible hatred of the fighting, hunting, swashbuckling side of life, symbolised in all his early books by a violent propaganda against horses. The principal villain of his *Outline of History* is the romantic military adventurer, Napoleon. If one looks through nearly any book that he has written in the last forty years one finds the same idea constantly recurring: the supposed antithesis between the man of science who is working towards a planned World State and the reactionary who is trying to restore a disorderly past. In novels, Utopias, essays, films, pamphlets the antithesis crops up, always more or less the same. On the one side science, order, progress, internationalism, aeroplanes, steel, concrete, hygiene: on the other side war, nationalism, religion, monarchy, peasants, Greek professors, poets, horses. History as he sees it is a series of victories won by the scientific man over the romantic man. Now, he is probably right in assuming that a 'reasonable', planned form of society, with scientists rather than witch-doctors in control, will prevail sooner or later, but that is a different matter from assuming that it is just round the corner. There survives somewhere or other an interesting controversy which took place between Wells and Churchill at the time of the Russian Revolution. Wells accuses Churchill of not really believing his own propaganda about the Bolsheviks being monsters dripping with blood, etc., but of merely fearing that they were going to introduce an era of commonsense and scientific control, in which flag-wavers like Churchill himself would have no place. Churchill's estimate of the Bolsheviks, however, was nearer the mark than Wells's. The early Bolsheviks may have been angels or demons, according as one chooses to regard them, but at any rate they were not sensible men. They were not introducing a

Wellsian Utopia but a Rule of the Saints, which, like the English Rule of the Saints, was a military despotism enlivened by witchcraft trials. The same misconception reappears in an inverted form in Wells's attitude to the Nazis. Hitler is all the war-lords and witch-doctors in history rolled into one. Therefore, argues Wells, he is an absurdity, a ghost from the past, a creature doomed to disappear almost immediately. But unfortunately the equation of science with common sense does not really hold good. The aeroplane, which was looked forward to as a civilizing influence but in practice has hardly been used except for dropping bombs, is the symbol of that fact. Modern Germany is far more scientific than England, and far more barbarous. Much of what Wells has imagined and worked for is physically there in Nazi Germany. The order, the planning, the State encouragement of science, the steel, the concrete, the aeroplanes, are all there, but all in the service of ideas appropriate to the Stone Age. Science is fighting on the side of superstition. But obviously it is impossible for Wells to accept this. It would contradict the world-view on which his own works are based. The war-lords and the witch-doctors *must* fail, the commonsense World State, as seen by a nineteenth-century liberal whose heart does not leap at the sound of bugles, *must* triumph. Treachery and defeatism apart, Hitler *cannot* be a real danger. That he should finally win would be an impossible reversal of history, like a Jacobite restoration.

But is it not a sort of parricide for a person of my age (38) to find fault with H. G. Wells? Thinking people who were born about the beginning of this century are in some sense Wells's own creation. How much influence any mere writer has, and especially a 'popular' writer whose work takes effect quickly, is questionable, but I doubt whether anyone who was writing books between 1900 and 1920, at any rate in the English language, influenced the young so much. The minds of all of us, and therefore the physical world, would be perceptibly different if Wells had never existed. Only, just the singleness of mind, the one-sided imagination that made him seem like an inspired prophet in the Edwardian age, make him a shallow inadequate thinker now. When Wells was young the antithesis between science and reaction was not false. Society was ruled by narrow-minded, profoundly incurious people, predatory business-men, dull squires, bishops, politicians who could quote Horace but had

never heard of algebra. Science was faintly disreputable and religious belief obligatory. Traditionalism, stupidity, snobbishness, patriotism, superstition and love of war seemed to be all on the same side; there was need of someone who could state the opposite point of view. Back in the nineteen-hundreds it was a wonderful experience for a boy to discover H. G. Wells. There you were, in a world of pedants, clergyman and golfers, with your future employers exhorting you to 'get on or get out', your parents systematically warping your sexual life, and your dull-witted schoolmasters sniggering over their Latin tags; and here was this wonderful man who could tell you about the inhabitants of the planets and the bottom of the sea, and who *knew* that the future was not going to be what respectable people imagined. A decade or so before aeroplanes were technically feasible Wells knew that within a little while men would be able to fly. He knew that because he himself *wanted* to be able to fly, and therefore felt sure that research in that direction would continue. On the other hand, even when I was a little boy, at a time when the Wright brothers had actually lifted their machine off the ground for fifty-nine seconds, the generally-accepted opinion was that if God had meant us to fly He would have given us wings. Up to 1914 Wells was in the main a true prophet. In physical details his vision of the new world has been fulfilled to a surprising extent.

But because he belonged to the nineteenth century and to a non-military nation and class, he could not grasp the tremendous strength of the old world which was symbolized in his mind by ignorant fox-hunting Tories. He was and still is quite incapable of understanding that nationalism, religious bigotry and feudal loyalty are far more powerful forces than what he himself would describe as sanity. Creatures out of the Dark Ages have come marching into the present, and if they are ghosts they are at any rate ghosts which need a strong magic to lay them. The people who have shown the best understanding of Fascism are either those who have suffered under it, or those who have a Fascist streak in themselves. A crude book like *The Iron Heel*, written nearly thirty years ago, is a truer prophecy of the future than either *Brave New World* or *The Shape of Things to Come*. If one had to choose among Wells's own contemporaries a writer who could stand towards him as a corrective, one might choose

Kipling, who was not deaf to the evil voices of power and military 'glory'. Kipling would have understood the appeal of Hitler or for that matter of Stalin, whatever his attitude towards them might be. Wells is too sane to understand the modern world. The succession of lower-middle-class novels which are his greatest achievement stopped short at the other war and never really began again, and since 1920 he has squandered his talents in slaying paper dragons. But how much it is, after all, to have any talents to squander.

SELECTED NOTICES

New Year Letter. By W. H. Auden. Faber, 10s. 6d.

At the beginning of this book Mr. Auden sets a quotation from Montaigne:

'We are, I know not how, double in ourselves, so that what we believe we disbelieve, and cannot rid ourselves of what we condemn.'

The long 'Letter' in verse that follows is an illustration of this thesis, a protracted commentary on ambivalence. As a moralist, a man concerned with what should be rather than with what is, Mr. Auden tries every now and then to get away from it; but it always drags him back again into a region where he sees affirmation as an aspect of negation, the Devil as an agent of progress, art as a compensation for practical incompetence, necessity as free, and freedom as necessity. The moralist tries repeatedly to cut this complicated knot, for it has to be cut before a moral act is possible; but the ends join as soon as they are parted, tying him up as before. For the first three-quarters of the poem this happens with almost monotonous regularity:

To set in order—that's the task
Both Eros and Apollo ask . . .
That order which must be the end
That all self-loving things intend
Who struggle for their liberty,
Who use, that is, their will to be.

Though order never can be willed
 But is the state of the fulfilled,
 For will but wills its opposite
 And not the whole in which they fit. . . .

The Devil is treated in the same way (Mr. Auden says many good things about him):

Poor cheated *Mephistopheles*
 Who think you're doing as you please
 In telling us, by doing ill
 To prove that we possess free-will . . .
 But so much more effective, though,
 Than our well-meaning, stupid friends
 In driving us towards good ends. . . .

The metaphysical see-saw goes on:

To sin is to act consciously
 Against what seems necessity,
 A possibility cut out
 In any world that excludes doubt. . . .

we're free to will

Ourselves to Purgatory still,
 Consenting parties to our lives
 To love them like attractive wives
 Whom we adore but do not trust;
 We cannot live without their lust,
 And need their stratagems to win
 Truth out of Time. In Time we sin. . . .

Is it not here that we belong
 Where everyone is doing wrong?

The only subject treated as an exception to the rule is Russia:

We hoped; we waited for the day
 The state would wither clean away,
 Expecting the Millennium
 That theory promised us would come:
 It didn't. Specialists must try
 To detail all the reasons why. . . .

But the reasons why are explained by the law of ambivalence, if it works as Mr. Auden makes it work. If the Devil is a moral force there can be no Millennium.

This tug-of-war between the moral instinct and a recognition of the relativity of goodness goes on through the first two books of the letter, producing a deadlock. It is dispersed at the beginning of the third book by the realization of a moment of harmony, in which

An accidental happiness,
Catching man off his guard, will blow him
Out of his life in time to show him
The field of Being where he may
Unconscious of Becoming, play
With the Eternal Innocence,
Of unimpeded utterance.

It is a momentary relief; ambivalence returns, though with an altered note:

But perfect Being has ordained
It must be lost to be regained
And in its orchards grows the tree
And fruit of human destiny,
And men must eat it and depart
At once with gay and grateful heart,
Obedient, reborn, re-aware. . . .

Yet after this, which is the crucial experience described in the 'Letter', Mr. Auden returns to his game with opposites, as if the field of Being were only an incident, of no more intrinsic importance than the progressive tendencies of the Devil, or the practical incompetence of artists. This gives a deep inconclusiveness to the poem, which seems to be making, with a great deal of excellent argument, towards something which is never reached, or is caught in passing and lost again. The notes at the end show from what miscellaneous sources the ideas of the poem were drawn: Pascal, Flaubert, Nietzsche, Wagner, Kierkegaard, Kafka, contemporary psychologists and anthropologists, newspaper statistics, and the guesses of science. The poem shows, at least, that nothing solid can be made out of the modern ideas we have tried to live upon for so long. Mr. Auden admits this himself in one of his numerous parenthesis, yet still goes on trying to shape a philosophy out of Freud and Marx, with Kierkegaard and Kafka as auxiliaries.

The 'Letter', which forms the main section of the book, is probably to be taken as a reaction against Mr. Auden's earlier,

clearcut, reformist view of life, a recognition that experience is more complex and equivocal than he had taken it to be and, among other things, that

Art is not life and cannot be
A midwife to society.

He is convincing when he expresses doubt, unconvincing when he tries to find an answer to doubt, for the doubt comes from a deeper source than the answer. No answer can be found on the plane of ambivalence, and in the end he has to fall back on faith:

O every day in sleep and labour
Our life and death are with our neighbour
And love illuminates again
The city and the lion's den,
The world's great rage, the travel of young men.

The poem contains some very good argument, a great number of ideas taken from modern science and literature, some excellent observations on the present state of the world, and underneath, a deep dissatisfaction with all these things, a dissatisfaction, probably, with the poem itself. The verse measure is skilfully used, the transitions are easy and natural, the argument has the sanction of the best that has been thought and said for the last forty years; but underneath all this one is conscious of a demon of dissatisfied doubt which swallows each idea as it is uttered, and devours at last, except for a few passages actually expressing doubt, or its complement faith, the whole poem.

After the 'Letter' comes a short section mainly in sonnet form called 'The Quest', incomparably the best part of the book. It contains some of the best poetry that Mr. Auden has ever written. The difference in quality between this section and the 'Letter' can be shown in almost any line, quoted at random:

The friends who met here and embraced are gone,
Each to his own mistake. . . .

In theory they were sound on Expectation
Had there been situations to be in;
Unluckily they were their situation. . . .

The demon of ambivalence intrudes into the latter part of this section too, making the imagery too easy; but the best poems have a clarity and depth which Mr. Auden has seldom excelled, a

fusion of the ordinary and the mythological which is as natural to him as it was to Kafka, and a new perfection of form. They show that, in spite of the inconclusive mental turmoil revealed in the 'Letter', his gifts as a poet are as great as ever, if not greater.

EDWIN MUIR

War into Europe: Attack in Depth. By Hugh Slater (Gollancz 5s.). Not long ago a book such as this was regarded as, at best provocative, at worst idle fantasy. But now realities have come so close to us, events have marched so fast upon the heels of possibility, that the actuality of the book is patent to everyone. It is a book that every soldier should read and indeed everyone interested in soldiering: and if much of the matter will be accepted by everyone there is still a good deal left over which is controversial.

Mr. Slater, who needs no introduction here, takes as his theme the strategy and tactics imposed by the development of the air arm and the tank, his main point being that our classic conception of depth (the principle of attack in depth was thoroughly applied by Napoleon) needs drastic revision. The tank, of course, has restored the possibility of breaking an enemy's front by means of a strong concentration of great strength; but air-borne troops—being able, like the angel of the medievalists, to go from one point to another without passing through the intervening space (as far as ground is concerned)—have made the idea of any 'front' unfruitful. The front is everywhere, even at the very heart of the country to be invaded. The question thus is, how far do these developments alter the principles of war in attack and defence?

The basic principles are probably not much altered. War is a battle of wits, of pitting cunning against cunning, of understanding the way your opponent's mind works. This entails the principles of morale, surprise originality of method, of hitting hard where hitting will have the most effect. Again, an army must be fed and supplied. This brings in the old necessities of organisation. But, of course, as is always well rubbed in whenever the subject is taught, though the rules of war are neither very numerous nor very abstruse, their application is difficult, and always changing. What used to be rubbed in with pardonable exaggeration, was some such phrase as 'in war, the unexpected always happens', together with the old Jacksonian maxim 'mystify, mislead, and surprise the enemy'.

How to do this, how to be ready for the enemy's guile, then, are Mr. Slater's problems. We already know a good deal about the enemy's methods, and we are learning more every day; Mr. Slater applies the lessons brilliantly. He is an admirable expositor, helps the reader with excellent plans, and thus makes clear his ingenious scheme for Home Defence, a subject which must at the moment be uppermost in our minds. His 'total defence' is based not on a front line, but on a system of strong points everywhere, with mobile forces free to mop up and attack. This is no doubt orthodox doctrine now, but it is as well for everybody to know it. His scheme for attack, when the time comes, is deep penetration regardless of communications—as the Germans practised it in France—aided by air-borne troops and fifth columnists. What he insists upon, however, is that victory can be obtained only if each man is enthusiastic for the thing he fights for, imbued with the sense that if he does not win, he will certainly die to all that matters to him in life.

Mr. Slater's book is stirring and encouraging, but here and there a word or two of warning may be necessary. One is reminded of the remark by that most brilliant of our military critics, Henderson: 'Military criticism takes a long time to recover its equilibrium. The practical effects of a new explosive, an improved fire-arm, a novel formation, no matter what the circumstances, are sufficient to drive it to extremes.' On two points Mr. Slater seems to have gone too far. He suggests, for instance, that the artillery can be dispensed with, because the tank and the bomber can between them do its job. That time may come, but it is certainly not here yet. For bombing is far from having the accuracy of artillery; it cannot for various obvious reasons be depended upon to act at a precise moment with any given volume of fire, and it cannot well sustain fire day and night as artillery can.

The other point on which he seems to err on the side of excess is on the question of the infantry, which he would like to see abolished except for parachute troops. His ideal army consists almost entirely of tanks and aeroplanes, with scientific research sections. But the infantry, with all due respect to Mr. Slater, is still the only arm that can hold ground as at least one episode in this war will help to argue.

There are one or two other small bones one would like to pick

with Mr. Slater in this book, which is vividly imagined, yet based on experience, the writings of previous advanced military critics, and the lessons of this war. It is so well explained, so exciting in its suggestions for our final attacks that besides being salutary, it is invigorating and should have a wide circulation. His chapter on the psychology of fear and courage is alone well worth studying, and should cause even the unaware to think more clearly.

BONAMY DOBRÉE

The Father Found. Poems by Charles Madge. Faber & Faber. 6s.
Death at Sea. Poems by Frederick Prokosch. Chatto & Windus. 6s.
Song and Idea. Poems by Richard Eberhart. Chatto & Windus. 6s.
Blind Men's Flowers are Green. Poems by Rayner Heppenstall, Secker & Warburg. 5s.

These poets, seeming to have nothing in common but their youth and a leaning towards obscurity, are here listed in what appears to me their order of present achievement, without regard to past performance, and will be discussed independently of each other.

The important thing about Charles Madge's work is that it seems to attempt to drag or coax into the light of poetry new things from the region of the hitherto-unexpressed. 'What oft was thought' is no concern of his. Allegory is the net with which he fishes up his often unintelligible imaginings; after several readings I can find no clue as to what is intended by such symbols as *The Electric Ghost* or *The Margarine*; the former appears in the entirely obscure playlet or charade which gives its name to the book and which seems made of fairy-tale material in that it is about a traveller who wins the hand of the Princess from the King her father, after combat with *The Electric Ghost*, an entity whose nature, meaning or relevance is never disclosed. The dialogue also maintains a high level of *non-sequitur*. *The Margarine* symbol has a poem all to itself, one so utterly bewildering that I can offer no account of it; nor can anyone else I have shown it to. Madge's allegorical manner scores a grateful success, however, in a poem of real beauty and meaning called *Who lives in the Castle*, which recalls the work of Mr. De La Mare at its best, and can be interpreted (though I do not say this was what the author intended), as an account of the nature of Poetry itself:

Yet, often, under high sun she would take
 Her old carved chair and watch the grass that blood
 Nurtured; her nature was the same enigma
 As those of algebraic symbols, dance
 For the abstract and lofty brain; her nature
 Was like the order of a field of grass
 Or eddies of a river in full flood.

Next, among poetic virtues, to his attempt in creative allegory. Madge can claim a sharp observation and a faculty for phrase to match:

. . . There also was a fly
 Busy at fly's devices on the pane. . . .

or

And peacock's tail that opens like a storm.

Such happy discoveries occur in almost every poem, side by side, unfortunately, with hideous and unintelligible expressions like

The limper, could he climb
 Down backstairs aboriginal incision?

The faults of Browning cannot make the virtues of Madge.

Frederick Prokosch is a poet whose verses have always charmed me by the shapely good manners of their sentiment; he is also uniformly fortunate in his picture-building and rhythms:

Black-eyed Ulysses, being an astute and eagle-hearted man,
 A heavily loined, lumbering man with a bird's eye and a bird's
 unrest,
 As he listened and heard through the lapping of the waves
 That loud, heart-breaking music, understood. Sweat poured
 from his brown chest.

Unfortunately what Ulysses understood was so utterly banal that it hardly deserves the Dowsonian line:

Flesh fanned easily into fire, and a heart as hard as a stone.
 Readers of Kafka (and Prokosch in another poem alludes to him) will remember there is more to be said about Ulysses than that. The style of Prokosch always suggests that of Heredia to me and leads me to wonder whether it is inescapable that the marmoreal and sculptured qualities of a line like

La gigantesque horreur de l'ombre Herculéenne
 must express or embody insipid notions such as that; and then I remember Milton whose line is marble, and his thought not brick,

Milton to whom a Heredia is as Canova to Michael Angelo; the inferior marble, as the inferior verse, seems to have no life inside it; it is shaped from without, not, like a fountain, from its inner thrust. Nevertheless it gives pleasure; if you have no inhibitions against simple sentiment and classic phrase (as I have not), Prokosch can charm you; his worst fault is one common among actors, a tendency to listen to himself and to his own suave voice; I could wish he had less sentiment and more passion.

Richard Eberhart seems not as yet quite certain of his style; he varies in the first part of his book from a Matthew Arnoldish Sonnet-style, as in the poem *Burden*, through Blake-like lyric and epigram, to a short chain of platitudes dedicated to and in the manner of Mr. Auden in gnomic mood. But even among these poems there are hints of better things to come, and in part two of the book they burst forth in several poems, notably in *Orchard: The Virgin*; and *A Meditation*; the last of these is a very ambitious soliloquy by a skull, as if to some Hamlet that holds it in his hand, an excellent and novel setting for an oracular poem; true, the language and vision of Hamlet's father, the Ghost, though recalled, are not here equalled; but there is some language and some vision. I am also grateful to Eberhart for one magnificent line in the poem about Irving Babbitt:

Warbling your native foot-notes mild.

Rayner Heppenstall uses astrological imagery as if he were an astrologer, and Christian imagery, but not as if he were a Christian; so at least it seems to me; but I must confess his style is often so very paradoxical and obscure that it is hard to know whose side he is on; metaphysical writers are necessarily difficult, having such difficult things to speak of. 'To write on their plan,' said Dr. Johnson of the followers of Donne, 'it was at least necessary to read and think'; and this is no doubt true also of Mr. Heppenstall; I can sometimes follow his reading, but seldom his thinking.

The poem *Homage to Leon Bloy* calls *Piers Plowman* to mind, especially in the passage on the trial of Jesus, but I can understand Langland more easily than Heppenstall. For his astrology, I pass it by, an incompetent reader. Of all his poems here printed *The Lament of the Young Men* is the most beautiful; it has a freeness of movement and an uncrabbedness which are welcome after the more puzzling poems.

NEVILL COGHILL

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